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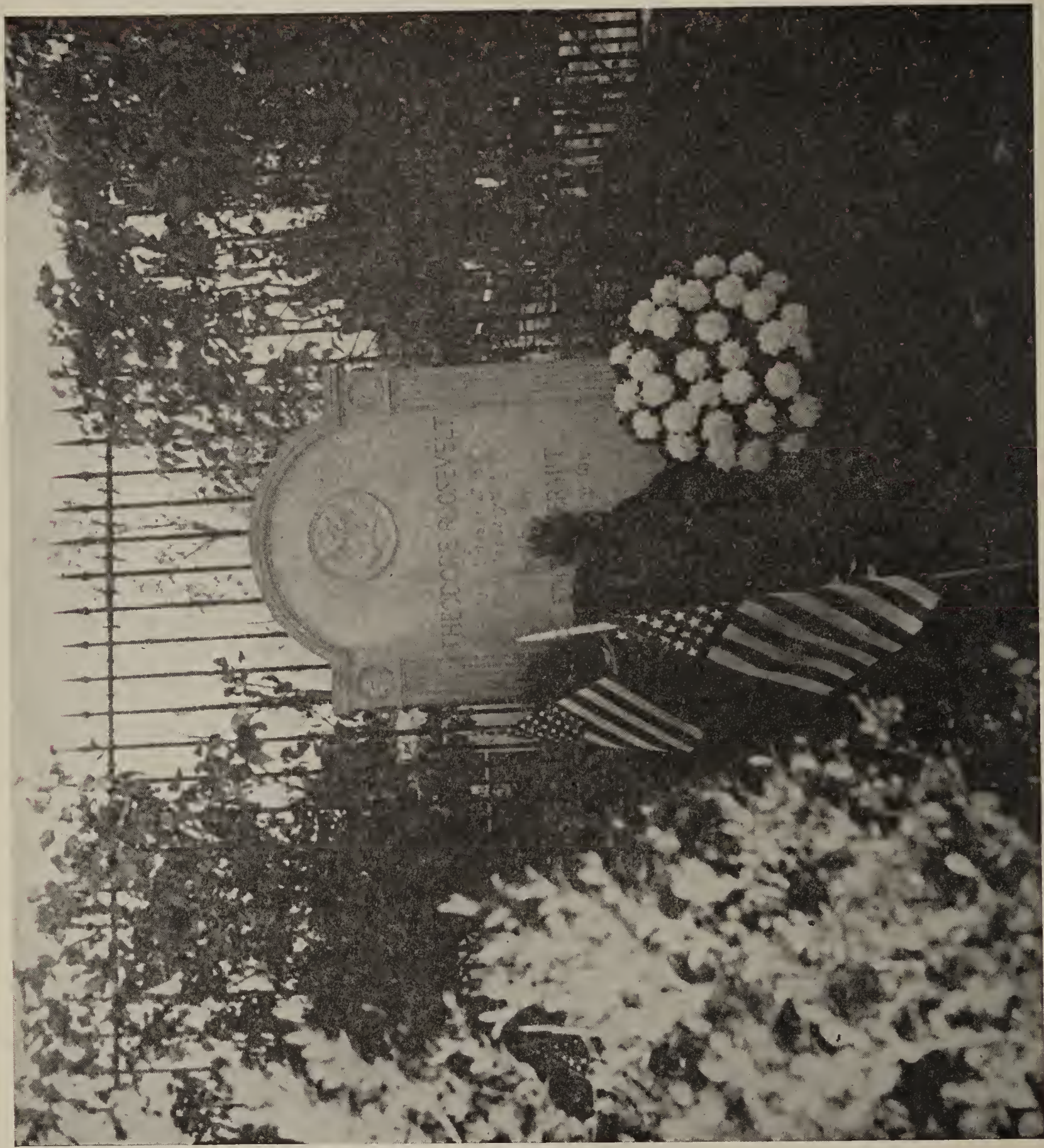


# LONG ISLAND

*A History of*

TWO GREAT COUNTIES  
NASSAU and SUFFOLK





*Grave of Theodore Roosevelt, Oyster Bay*



# LONG ISLAND

*A History of*

TWO GREAT COUNTIES  
NASSAU and SUFFOLK

*Edited by*

PAUL BAILEY

*Founder-Publisher of*

*The "LONG ISLAND FORUM"*

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VOLUME II

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## CHAPTER XIX

### *Long Island's Shellfisheries*

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*Scientific Paper - 30.00 (3 10/18)*

LONG ISLAND, the largest island in our inshore Atlantic coast waters, with its irregular coastline of approximately 600 miles, is strategically located to furnish its harvest of fish and shellfish to the great metropolitan area of New York City. Its many indentations, bays, irregular coastline, and relatively shallow waters furnish ideal conditions for a rich harvest of shellfish. Its excellent transportation facilities by rail and modern trunk highways leading to metropolitan New York give it easy access to markets. At the same time, rapid growth in population and industrialization and nearness to a great metropolitan center have created sewage and industrial waste problems which have cut heavily into its former productive capacity, and created difficult problems for maintenance of shellfish production particularly for such forms as oysters and clams which are relatively fixed in their abode. In fact, during the past 40 years production has declined 35 per cent. Through the awakening of the public conscience to the need for reducing the damages of sewage and industrial wastes, through the aids of biological research experts in solving the problems of the oyster farmer, and through the development of cultural methods for clams and other shellfish, it should be possible to maintain the production of shellfish at profitable levels, and supply the metropolitan area with products of unexcelled freshness.

#### STATISTICAL REVIEW

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The catch figures and values to the fishermen for the years 1901, 1921 and 1942, shown herewith, will enable the reader to visualize the importance of the shellfisheries and trends of production over a period of 40 years. According to these summaries in 1901 New York's shellfisheries totaled over 17,200,000 pounds, valued at \$2,163,514; in 1921, nearly 13,566,000 pounds, valued at \$2,785,801, and in 1942, 11,434,000 pounds, valued at \$3,425,364. It will be noted that in 1901 the surf clam or skimmer is not listed, with only a small catch in 1921, and a moderate catch in 1942, which represented the beginning of the recent rapid development of this fishery. Over 800,000 pounds of crabs are reported in 1901, and 483,000 pounds in 1921, while none are reported in 1942. Small catches have been reported in 1940 and 1943. The principal reason for this decline would appear to be a lack of interest in the fishery at current market prices. Certain products such as shrimp used primarily for bait, and conches, the catch of which is inconsequential, have not been included in these statistics.

## LONG ISLAND—NASSAU AND SUFFOLK

## SHELLFISHERIES OF LONG ISLAND, 1901, 1921 AND 1942

1901	Pounds	Bushels	Value
Hard clams.....	1,478,368	184,796	\$ 257,686
Soft clams.....	779,450	77,945	58,843
Oysters, market.....	12,380,921	1,768,703	1,703,985
Scallops .....	1,109,724	184,954	107,337
Lobsters .....	183,539	.....	21,742
Mussels .....	262,400	10,240	1,800
Squid .....	180,846	.....	5,114
Crabs, hard.....	791,725	.....	4,903
Crabs, soft.....	40,440	.....	2,104
	17,207,413		\$2,163,514
1921	Pounds	Bushels	Value
Hard clams.....	770,224	96,278	\$ 216,478
Soft clams.....	188,150	18,815	32,995
Skimmers or surf clams	48,160	6,020	11,300
Oysters .....	9,423,470	1,346,210	2,070,496
Scallops .....	1,235,760	205,960	217,108
Lobsters .....	1,037,395	.....	196,762
Mussels .....	50,000	5,000	2,500
Squid .....	330,117	.....	18,500
Crabs, hard.....	477,242	.....	17,807
Crabs, soft.....	5,885	.....	1,855
	13,566,403		\$2,785,801
1942	Pounds	Bushels	Value
Hard clams.....	2,249,600	281,200	\$ 729,748
Soft clams.....	561,200	35,000	105,000
Skimmers or surf clams	340,000	28,300	29,000
Oysters .....	6,400,000	853,300	2,144,260
Scallops .....	1,045,800	251,200	321,278
Lobsters .....	156,800	.....	38,648
Mussels .....	326,200	32,620	22,825
Squid .....	354,400	.....	34,605
	11,434,000		\$3,425,364

## THE OYSTER (OSTREA VIRGINICA)

Large Indian shellheaps or "kitchen middens" at various points along our Atlantic coast attest to the former abundance of oysters and other shellfish, and the dependence of the aborigines on them for food. Without these natural resources some of the early settlements would have been wiped out. In the Long Island area the waters abounded with fine oysters over a much larger area than they are found today. Ernest Ingersoll, writing in 1887 for the U. S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, has given us a vivid picture of former conditions in these words:



“From the eastern part of Connecticut westward and southward along the coast, the thing noteworthy is not where oysters grew naturally in primitive times, but where they did not. Every spot of shore or river-mouth, as far as tide-waters and suitable grounds extended, besides many shallow ‘reefs’ in the open water of Long Island Sound, were crowded with these mollusks, unless unfavorable condition prevented. The most noticeable barren areas were the eastern half of the north shore of Long Island, the storm-swept outer beaches of Montauk and the south shore of Long Island (though these beaches sheltered extensive areas of oyster-beds between them and the mainland), and the open coast of New Jersey, from Sandy Hook almost to Cape May. Here, however, great bays, like that at Barnegat, and several rivers, such as those which reach the sea through Atlantic County and Cape May County, furnish the quiet shallow waters that make an oyster tenantry possible, and in these an extensive growth has always flourished.

“In New York Bay—to go back a little—oysters once grew naturally all along the Brooklyn shore, and in the East River; all around Manhattan Island; up the Hudson as far as Sing Sing; on the Jersey shore from that point to Keyport, N. J., and in Keyport, Raritan, Newark, and Hackensack Rivers; all around Staten Island, and on many reefs and wide areas of bottom between Robyn’s Reef and Jersey City. Explorers and colonists were saved any trouble in finding this out for themselves, since the red men were in the habit of gathering clams and oysters at all practical seasons, and depended upon them largely for their food.”

“On Long Island”, writes Ingersoll, “oysters grew in great abundance in every bay and inlet as far east as Port Jefferson, beyond which the bold coast of shifting sand is unsuitable, until the long-ago exterminated colonies inside of Orient Point, at the eastern end, were reached. From Port Jefferson westward a good many native oysters are still taken to market, and once in a while a deposit is found which has lain undisturbed long enough to bring to salable maturity a considerable quantity; yet no one makes much account of these, and the natural beds are devoted almost wholly to seed-producing. Harlem River and Gowanus Bay were both noted in primitive times for the excellence of their oysters.

“A similar fate has overtaken the once highly-productive grounds in the Great South Bay, on the southern shore of Long Island. Originally oysters in this sound were confined almost wholly between Smith’s Point and Fire Island—practically to the waters east of Blue Point, known as Brookhaven Bay. This was the home of the famous celebrity, the Blue Point oyster, which was among the earliest to come to New York markets. The present oyster of this brand is small and round, but the old ‘Blue Points,’ cherished by the Dutch burghers and peak-hatted sons of the Hamptons, who toasted

the king long before our Revolution was thought of, was of the large, crooked, heavy-shelled, elongated kind with which one becomes familiar all along the coast in examining relics of the natural beds. Now and then, a few years ago, one of these aboriginal oysters, of which two dozen made a sufficient armful, was dragged up and excited the curiosity of every one; but the time has gone by when any more of these monsters may be expected. As early as 1679, according to *Watson's Annals*, this bay had become the scene of an extensive industry. In 1853 the *New York Herald* reported that the value of all the Blue Point oysters, by which name the Great South Bay oysters generally were meant, did not exceed yearly \$200,000. 'They are sold for an average of ten shillings (\$1.25) a hundred from the beds; but, as they are scarce and have a good reputation, they sell at a considerable advance upon this price when brought to market. At one period, when they might be regarded as in their prime, they attained a remarkable size; but now their proportions, as well as their numbers, have been greatly reduced.' The people did not take alarm soon enough. When, a few years later, they did become frightened at the threatened extirpation of their resources, their efforts were all but too late to save the beds from total annihilation. As it is, only transplanted oysters are now sent to market from that district. Between Fire Island and New York Bay no natural beds of any consequence ever grew, so far as we know, but large interests in planting have arisen. Inside New York Bay, however, the oysters formed a very important item in enumerating the advantages of the new country.

"Prof. S. S. Lockwood estimates that, including the waters inside of Staten Island, not less than 350 square miles of rich oyster banks were open to the people dwelling about New York Bay at the time of its first settlement. This resource was deemed inexhaustible, and perhaps might have proved so, or at least have longer delayed its decadence, had not incessant removal of oysters been supplemented by the covering up of the beds or the killing of their occupants by impurities in the water, which more and more increased as population grew and civilization advanced upon the neighboring shores. No doubt the clearing away of the forests and the drainage of so many towns and factories have produced an increase of sediment and pollution in the Hudson River, quite sufficient to put an end to most of its more exposed oyster beds, even had they never been touched; and certainly this is true of the harbor itself."

Subsequent events substantiated Lockwood's fears of 1887 as to the decadence of the oyster industry resulting from industrial development, growth in population, pollution and a scarcity of seed oysters and other factors.



We find a most interesting point of view of foreign observers of our oyster industry as expressed by Prof. Mobius (*Oysters and All About Them*, by John R. Philpots, 1891, London):

"In North America the oysters are so fine and cheap that they are eaten daily by all classes. Hence they are now, and have been for a long time, a real means of subsistence for the people. This enviable fact is no argument against the injuriousness of a continuous and severe fishing of the beds. \* \* \* But as the number of consumers increases in America, the price will also surely advance, and then there will arise a desire to fish the banks more severely than hitherto, and if they do not accept in time the unfortunate experience of the oyster culturists of Europe, they will surely find their oyster beds impoverished for having defied the biocoenotic laws."

William Firth Wells, Biologist and Sanitarian for the state, in a report on the effects of pollution of streams stated:

"Oyster fishery is failing. Oyster culture, the most valuable fishery in the state of New York, is rapidly declining and threatens to become extinct. Over a million bushels of oysters, valued at more than a million dollars, were annually harvested in this State a few years ago. Today this crop has shrunk to one-half its former magnitude and is decreasing each year. Lack of seed oysters has caused this condition and, unless a plentiful and cheap supply of seed becomes available, this decline will continue until the production of our grounds is limited to the small output of our natural oyster beds."

We find further reasons for this decline in production in the declining acreage. According to an estimate made in 1928, there were originally in New York 687,000 acres of grounds suitable for shellfish cultivation. At that time 82,600 acres of oyster-growing grounds had been rendered wholly useless because of sewage trade wastes and other factors; 166,800 acres had been eliminated from productive purpose or restricted as to use and only 21,975 acres were now growing oysters without restriction as to use. In other words, out of 271,375 acres of oyster-producing grounds in the state by 1928, only 7½% were still used for growing oysters without restrictions and if we return to primitive conditions as the white man found them, present unrestricted actually productive areas represent but little more than 3% of the original acreage capable of producing oysters.

During the half century from 1880 to 1930, the annual catch of market oysters in New York waters was never less than one million bushels reaching a high of 3,547,900 bushels in 1911 for which the oystermen received nearly \$3,200,000. Beginning with 1931, the catch declined to less than one million bushels, and with the exception of 1937 and 1938 has remained below this level. This decline in volume

has been offset to a considerable degree by higher prices; for example, the 1942 harvest of 853,000 bushels netted the oystermen over \$2,140,000, and rising prices during the war years must have given further encouragement to the oyster farmers. Were it not for the perseverance and industry of Long Island's oyster farmers, the oyster fishery of New York would long ago have sunk to a level of little importance. As it is, these men deserve the highest praise for their efforts to maintain this important industry, battling continuously against the depredations of the enemies of the oyster. To get a true picture of their worth, it is well to remember that of over a million acres of oyster-producing grounds in United States waters, the 200,000 acres under cultivation produce 60% of our annual harvest.

Back in the Gay Nineties in the days of "Diamond Jim" Brady, dinners without oysters were unthinkable. Brady had a marvelous appetite and as George Rector once told a reporter, "We greeted him as our *ten* best guests". He was especially fond of oysters, large oysters as big as your hand, three dozen of which constituted the first course of his meal. Then there is "Billy the Oysterman", the third of a family dynasty of oystermen who estimated that in thirty years he had served more than 41,600,000—an all-time record it is believed.

In the old days, according to Billy, no self-respecting oyster lover would think of eating a meal with less than a dozen oysters. In the early 1900s boisterous damsels like Lillian Russell made nightly after-theatre suppers of small mountains of fried oysters.

Now that the tide is turning away from the hot-house quality so eagerly sought after by many women of today with an appreciation of the need for sparkling vitality attained through good food and proper exercise, oysters and other seafoods may again be in growing demand. A recent survey of the eating habits of the general public showed 55% eating before going to bed. Nutrition experts have placed their stamp of approval on the fourth meal so long as the total intake is distributed over the four meals. A century ago a bowl of piping hot oyster stew with toast and hard rolls or crisp crackers formed the traditional Christmas and New Year's Eve supper. Considering the happy way the oyster has of inducing sleep of the deep and restful kind, the oyster stew would appear to be the ideal dish for that fourth meal, especially on a wintery night, the season when oysters are fattest and of finest flavor.

As the future of Long Island's oyster industry depends on an adequate supply of seed and the cultivation of oysters, a brief review of oyster-farming operations on Long Island will be helpful in attempting to evaluate the future of the industry. By 1853, with the threatened exhaustion of the natural stock, the first steps in oyster farming—the transplanting of oysters from other areas—became necessary. In 1855, some City Island oystermen, profiting by the work of the French scientist, M. Coste, in getting larval oysters to attach or "set" on clean shells, tile or other hard objects, began planting shells on otherwise barren bottoms of Long Island Sound. From that time oyster cultivation began to develop as a new industry.



Oysters do not thrive naturally in the open sea but in bays, coves, estuaries and mouths of rivers; that is, in partially enclosed waters rendered brackish by land drainage, areas most favorable to the production of diatoms and other microscopic organisms on which the oyster feeds. In growing a crop which takes from four to six years to mature, the oyster farmer must have control over the bottoms he cultivates. Connecticut was the first State to grant vested rights in oyster grounds. In 1842, lawful right was given the owner of any land wherein there were salt water creeks or inlets, to dam, gage, or lock these for his own use for growing oysters. An amendment passed in 1845 permitted residents under certain limitations and restrictions to lay down or plant in navigable waters oysters brought from any waters within the State, and the following year a further amendment permitted the transplanting of oysters from extrastate as well as intrastate waters. Titles to the use of oyster lands are determined by the laws of the several States. In many States such as Rhode Island they are held under renewable leases; in Connecticut, for the most part, by perpetual franchise, and in New York they are owned in fee. For the most part, the free fishermen have vigorously opposed the granting of exclusive rights, and by restrictive legislation have seriously interfered with the growth of oyster farming.

Through trial and error over many years of experimentation, the oyster farmer has learned to divide his oyster grounds into three classes—setting or propagating grounds; growing grounds, and maturing grounds. As an abundant supply of seed oysters is necessary, favorable setting (seed) grounds or natural seed areas are highly important to the welfare of the industry. In the Long Island area, where favorable spawning and setting conditions may occur once in four or five years, the shoal warmer waters near the shore are used. Because of the adaptability of Connecticut inshore waters to the growing of seed oysters, and the green color of the meats due to the high mineral content rendering them less attractive to consumers, Long Island oystermen have acquired seed grounds in these waters for the production of seed, while some Connecticut oystermen in turn own or lease growing and maturing grounds in Long Island waters. Large quantities of Connecticut seed oysters are planted on beds in Gardiners and Peconic Bays and tributaries. The excellent growth and fine quality of these oysters were soon recognized and they became famous in the markets of the country for their fine flavor.

In preparation for a crop the farmer carefully cleans his seed grounds, dredging up the old surface shells, debris and the natural enemies of the oyster. When the water begins to warm up in June, just prior to the time of spawning, thousands of bushels of oyster shells from the shucking houses are scattered over the grounds at the rate of about 500 to 1000 bushels per acre. Spawning beds of mature oysters are maintained in close proximity to the seed grounds, or stocks of large spawners are scattered over the setting grounds.

The fecundity of the eastern oyster is almost unbelievable. A single female may discharge from 100 million to 500 million eggs in a single season, while the male may liberate millions of mobile sperma-

tozoa. Under favorable spawning conditions, in due time the old shells planted on the bottom may be literally covered with the tiny spat, the numbers sometimes ranging from 1500 to 65,000 spat for each bushel of shell. After a set has been obtained, if the ground is reasonably safe from winter storms and ice, the young growing oysters may be allowed to remain for a year or more; otherwise in the fall they will be shifted to growing grounds. The term "seed oysters" is loosely applied to the set which is only a few months old and no larger than one's finger nail or to oysters of nearly marketable size purchased for planting on cultivated grounds. A current of water is set up by means of pulsating cilia, bathing the gills and aerating the blood. The microscopic food particles carried in this stream of water become entangled and drawn into the stomach. An adult oyster in warm weather may filter water at the rate of 26 quarts a day. On a well populated oyster ground the competition for the microscopic food of the oyster is very great and for best results should not be complicated by a crop of young oysters attached to an older crop underneath.

In order to meet this difficulty many oystermen have converted thousands of acres of useless bottoms on which oysters do not set into bottoms suitable for transplanting the seed oysters where they will be freed from many of the dangers to oysters on natural grounds. The seed oysters are planted about 300 to 500 bushels to the acre, depending on the richness of the set and character of ground. At the end of a year, when the quantity of the crop should have doubled, about half of the crop is thinned out and moved to other growing grounds to prevent crowding, which might result in ill-shaped oysters and a high mortality. The same process is usually repeated during the next two years. Therefore, at the age of 4 years the oysters may have been transplanted two or three times. However, the mortality is so high that probably not more than 2 or 3 per cent of the original spat has survived and but a small fraction of 1 per cent of the original spat is ever matured.

Having reached a marketable size, the oysters are removed to maturing grounds usually in water of 2 or 3 fathoms, where an abundance of food will fatten the oysters for marketing.

Throughout this period from egg to maturity, the oyster farmer has to wage relentless warfare against the enemies of the oyster—starfish, drills, drumfish, conches, mussels, boring sponges, boring clams, leeches and other enemies, and is subject to losses from storms, hurricanes, winter ice, silt, drifting sand and other unfavorable factors. For example the hurricane of September 21, 1938, did very heavy damage to the oyster beds in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York, destroying several million bushels of oysters. In some cases the beds were buried under sand and mud; in other cases the oysters were picked up and scattered over adjacent areas, in some cases on public grounds, mingling the oysters of one year class with those of others on nearby beds. The damage was estimated at two million dollars or more.

For more than a half century scientists have been studying the problems of the oyster industry—the spawning and early develop-



ment of the oyster, its food and feeding habits, including hibernation, improvements in seed collectors, studies of the starfish, drill and other enemies of the oysters, including devices for catching them or means for their destruction. One of the earliest scientific investigations of oyster culture was begun in 1888 in New Jersey by the late Dr. Julius Nelson, of Rutgers University and Agricultural Experiment Station, who undertook to ascertain the reasons for the decline of some of the oyster beds of that State. Federal and State agencies



*Inside the New Greenport Oyster Plant*

and institutions have sponsored oyster investigations until today few, if any, economic marine animals have been the subject of so much study. This has been a very important factor in encouraging the development of oyster farming and the establishment of a fishery management program in those States with large natural oyster rock. For success the oyster farmer needs a dependable source of supply of seed oysters, grounds rich enough in the organisms on which the oyster feeds to promote growth and fattening, and adequate means for controlling the enemies of oysters. Coupled with the benefits to be derived from scientific research is the awakening of the public conscience to the need for reducing the heavy load of domestic sewage and trade wastes. As this clean-up continues it may be possible to restore many acres to productive use.

In the oyster producing areas from Cape Cod to New Jersey about 99 per cent of the harvest is from cultivated beds, the catch

from natural grounds being inconsequential. The handling of tens of thousands of bushels of shells for cultch, the transference of seed oysters to growing grounds, and replanting a number of times, as well as harvesting the catch, and shucking and packing it for market, require a very heavy investment in boats many of which are powered with Diesel engines, also docks, shore plants, packing equipment and marketing facilities, including refrigeration. The individual may lease or own from a few acres of oyster bottoms up to 25,000 acres or more. Some of the larger boats equipped to operate a number of dredges are capable of handling a very large volume of oysters, one of which with a capacity of 4000 bushels is reported to be able to dredge as high as 1000 bushels of oysters per hour.

Long Island has some of the finest oyster packing houses in the country. One of these, located near Greenport, is a modern building—120' x 192'—of steel, brick, stucco, and concrete, completely equipped for unloading and preparing oysters for shipment to market. Adjoining this building is a landlocked basin—200' x 200'—connected by a channel 50 feet wide extending out to deep water. Two unloading piers extend into the basin to support conveyors for transferring oysters to the building and to provide a place for docking and moving the boats. The plant contains adequate provision for preparing and culling oysters for shipment in the shell, and for shucking the oysters and preparing them for shipment to market in large volume.

Scientific oyster farming, improved transportation and refrigeration facilities, attractive packaging in individual consumer packages, the complete digestibility of oyster proteins and the revelations of science as to the richness of oysters in minerals and vitamins, have removed oysters from the class of luxury foods and made them available to our people however remote from points of production at reasonable cost. Then, too, oysters and other shellfish have unique dietary values. They are known to contain all the minerals found necessary to maintain health, being especially rich in iodine, iron and copper, and are known to be low in fat. You need not be surprised to find frozen oysters from Long Island on the menu at some hotel in Honolulu or in normal times oysters served in London or other British cities, having been grown in the United States, shipped to England for rebedding and harvested and served during the summer months when the English oyster is not edible.

Furthermore, no area of production can boast of more varieties of oysters than Long Island, nor more partisans as to which production area yields the finest oysters be they Blue Points, Fire Island Salts, Gardiners Bays, Oyster Bays, Robbins Island or other varieties among the aristocrats of the oyster kingdom grown along the shores of Long Island.

#### THE QUAHOG OR HARD SHELL CLAM (*VENUS MERCENARIA*)

The quahog or hard shell clam occurs in abundance from Cape Cod to Florida, and is the most abundant clam along the Middle Atlantic Coast. Our annual yield approximates 13 million pounds of meats worth about 2.2 million dollars. This clam lives in coastal



waters from near high tide to depths of 50 feet or more. In New York waters the clams occurring in or near the tidal zone are dug from the sand with rakes or picked by hand, while those in deeper waters are harvested with tongs. The bulk of the catch is sold fresh, while the rest is canned—either minced, as chowder or as clam cocktail.

According to Ingersoll (l.c.) the south shore of Long Island was formerly a great source of supply of hard shell clams which were sold in New York and used to supply the immense and numerous summer hotels along the entire length of the island which were open during warm weather. They were harvested the year round except when ice prevented, but most actively when oysters were out of season. In 1880, a single firm of packers at Islip used as high as 5 million clams in a season. At this time the harvest along the north shore of Long Island was estimated at over 300,000 bushels. Port Washington, Little Neck, Whitestone, and Centerport were among the principal production centers. At Port Washington alone about 500 persons regularly raked quahogs in the summer time.

Beginning about 1900, many thousands of bushels of small clams were bedded on private areas on the south side of Long Island. According to a Bureau of Fisheries Report for 1901 comparatively few of these cultivated clams were marketed prior to that time, the harvest of that year amounting to 9260 bushels selling for \$25,565. The popularity of small clams, says the report, is constantly increasing in the markets, and in time their cultivation on the south side of Long Island may even rival oyster culture. By 1904, production of cultivated hard clams had increased to over 47,000 bushels, but subsequently declined. The expectation that clam cultivation might rival oyster culture appears not to have been realized, as in 1942 production from private beds was less than 71,000 bushels, and from public beds, 210,000 bushels.

Changes in yield and prices to the fishermen give us the best index to this fishery. In 1880, the yield exceeded 322,000 bushels, returning to the fishermen an average of 76 cents per bushel; in 1901, it was 185,000 bushels, returning \$1.40; in 1904, 167,000 bushels, worth \$1.80 per bushel; in 1921, 96,000 bushels, bringing \$2.25 per bushel, and in 1942, 281,000 bushels, averaging \$2.60 per bushel to the harvester.

According to the Fish and Wildlife Service so long as the public fails to cultivate its clam grounds, discourages private cultivation, and pours its domestic sewage and industrial wastes over its good clam-growing area, it can get only a fraction of the potential yield of this resource.

#### THE SOFT SHELL CLAM (*MYA ARENARIA*)

The soft shell clam is found on tidal flats and beaches, inlets and bays generally in the intertidal zones in our North, Middle Atlantic and Chesapeake areas. The annual yield is about 16.5 million pounds of meats, valued at about 1.2 million dollars. Practically the entire catch is from public beds. The small-sized "steamers" are usually

sold in the shell, while the larger ones are shucked and the meats iced. The trend of this fishery in New York waters is illustrated graphically by the catch figures. In 1880, the catch totaled nearly 294,000 bushels for which the fishermen received 50 cents a bushel; in 1901, 78,000 bushels, bringing 75 cents per bushel; in 1920, 18,800 bushels, returning \$1.75 per bushel; in 1942, 105,000 bushels, yielding \$3.00 per bushel, a fivefold increase in value in 42 years.

In Fishery Resources of the United States (Senate Doc. No. 51, 79th Congress, 1st Session) the situation with respect to the soft shell clam is summed up thus: "If the annual yield of soft shell clams is to be substantially increased, most States must take better care of their resources either by scientific cultivation of public grounds, or by liberalizing the opportunities of private interests to lease grounds. Unfortunately, up to the present, municipalities and States rarely, if ever, have cultivated their clam resources; instead, they neglect them and allow this source of wealth to dissipate away."

The soft shell clam is not only prized as a savory food by those familiar with it but for long has been in great demand for bait especially in the old fishing bank fisheries. It was customary to remove the meats from the shell, salt and pack them in barrels.

#### THE SURF CLAM (*MACTRA SOLIDISSIMA*)

The surf clam or skimmer found on exposed coasts from Labrador to Cape Hatteras is one of the commonest shellfish along the southern shore of Long Island and other Middle Atlantic areas. The increased demand for shellfish and other foods developed during World War II led to the rapid exploitation of this resource. Within a three-year period (1943-46) the catch reached an annual volume of 24 million pounds, yielding about 4 million pounds of canned clam meats, with no indication of any abatement in the demand. The very rapid growth and danger of overexploitation of this fishery within a very few years make it an interesting subject for study and guidance in developing a management program for our shellfisheries.

"For many years prior to 1943", according to James R. Westman, Senior Aquatic Biologist, Bureau of Marine Fisheries, State of New York Conservation Department, "there was a moderate production of surf clams as bait for commercial and sports fishing boats in both Long Island and New Jersey—the latter region entering into moderate scale production during the middle or late thirties. To a much lesser extent, surf clams were also used as food but chiefly, it seems, by summer residents along the shore-front and those other persons who happened to be aware of the skimmer clam's excellent table qualities when correctly prepared. Production at that time was accomplished through power dredging augmented by hand tonging—the latter in the surf areas along the shore and also in the vicinity of Three Mile harbor and Greenport. The centers of power dredging on Long Island, originated in Sheepshead Bay and were soon located in the regions of Rockaway and Jones Inlets where several



dredgers were active. Total production of surf clams for bait during the late 'twenties and in the 'thirties was perhaps 30,000 bushels annually, with probably 90% accounted for by power dredging."

Despite numerous efforts over a period of many years to interest canners to pack this product in cans, it was not until early in 1943 when a Maine cannery hunting for an abundant supply of shellfish received a shipment sufficient for experimentation. This experiment met with such favor that demand increased from 140 bushels to as high as 1500 bushels per day. It was not long before establishments in Long Island became interested in the production and processing of this product. Methods of harvesting and processing were changed with great rapidity for more economical operations.

"When the skimmer was first established as a food industry" (Westman, l.c.), "nearly all the harvesting was done from beds just off Jones Inlet (inside a two-mile radius from S.E. to S.W.). As more boats entered the fishery, however, more areas were harvested until, by late summer of 1945, the skimmer 'area' extended from East Rockaway Inlet to Gilgo, a distance of some 20 miles. Another area was also discovered, late in 1945, in the vicinity of Fire Island Inlet, and several vessels began harvesting clams in that region. By the end of 1945 the total number of boats engaged in the fishery had increased from the original four or five to more than 50.

"Clams in this so-called skimmer 'area' occur in various degrees of concentration, with the higher densities forming 'streaks' or 'ridges', in a sort of mosaic. It is these 'streaks' which are buoyed by individual boats in order that they may more effectively work these higher concentrations. The sizes of these 'streaks' vary greatly; from only a few feet in extent to several hundreds of feet in length and breadth. Most of the individual streaks studied by the writer had clams of fairly uniform size; the range was frequently less than one inch, with as many as 80% of the clams falling within a half-inch range. Based on the assumption that shell 'ridges' or 'checks' are representative of age, the streaks were heavily dominated by either one or two year-classes. The density of the clams on these streaks obviously is quite heavy, and in many instances they must be crowded together like cobblestones.

"Early in 1945, the industry standardized upon  $4 \frac{1}{16}$  inches, measured on the longest axis, as the minimum desired length for skimmers; and this size was written into the State Conservation Law in May of that same year.

"Based upon the aforementioned 'ridge' counts on shells, the growth rate of skimmers is variable; a single age class of clams from a particular streak usually fell into a 'normal curve', but significant differences in size were sometimes



noted between similar age classes of adjacent streaks. Moreover, in the areas east of Jones Inlet the clams examined by the writer showed less variation in growth rate than those west of the inlet. In the former locality the clams examined suggested that a large proportion of the 'five-year-olds' had reached  $4 \frac{1}{16}$  inches in length and that nearly all of the 'six-year' group had attained this legal size; while west of Jones Inlet, streaks of 'runts' were sometimes encountered which had not attained  $3 \frac{1}{2}$  inches in 'five years' of growth. During the summer of 1945 the writer 'tagged' a number of clams by marking the shells with a red dye in order, if possible, to check upon the growth rate and to determine survival of under-sized clams returned to the water. Recoveries of some of these marked clams suggested that the 'ridge' counts were of significance and that mortality among the returned clams was about equal to the proportion of severely cut 'tongues' (feet).

"Under experimental conditions, skimmer clams exhibit considerable activity and can dig themselves down into previously undisturbed hard sand in a matter of a minute or so. Under these experimental conditions, skimmers would also fail to retract their feet unless rather violently disturbed. Moderate poking often merely prompted them to dig deeper into the sand. The siphon is phototropic and the clam would often retract its siphon below the surface of the sand when a shadow fell across it.

"Clams in the surf regions are more deeply embedded at certain times than at others and persons who have tonged for skimmers report that this is particularly correlated with tidal conditions. It is thus suggested that both tidal and weather conditions may account for the apparent changes in the availability of clams on a particular streak. At no time has the writer encountered any evidence which would indicate that the skimmer clam undergoes hibernation during the winter months, although it seems possible that individuals or groups might hibernate for short periods from time to time. As yet, there is also no evidence which suggests any extensive migration of clam groups, although the skimmer is quite capable of moving in horizontal directions."

Westman proceeds to discuss the decline in abundance, the increased intensity of fishing effort of favored areas, the search for new production areas, the need for regulations, a better understanding of the life history of the surf clam, improvements in the methods of conducting the fishery which will prove less destructive to the crop, and the need for the development of a satisfactory management program for this fishery "so that the optimum economic yield can be perpetually sustained".

As is the case with oysters and other important shellfish, the future of the surf clam fishery of Long Island rests upon the development of a sound fishery management program for sustained yield

supplemented with studies as to the practicability of propagating the species on a commercial scale.

#### SCALLOPS

Unlike oysters and clams, scallops are capable of motion in the water. By continuously opening and closing the two shells they are able to effect a form of jet propulsion which moves them rapidly and erratically for short distances through the water. Scallops differ in another respect in that when removed from the water they quickly lose their shell liquor and die within a few hours. For this reason the central muscle, the only part eaten, is cut out immediately after capture.

The catch is made up of two species. The bay scallop (*Pecten irradians*) is found in bays and estuaries from New England to the Gulf of Mexico, chiefly on sandy or muddy flats covered with eel grass. The sea scallop (*Pecten magellanicus*) occurs on sandy and rocky bottoms in depths from 2 to 150 fathoms. In recent years the annual catch has increased from a few hundred thousand pounds to over 7 million pounds. As earlier catch figures did not differentiate between the two species, the relative importance of each cannot be shown. In 1898, the catch accredited to New York approximated 109,000 bushels for which the fishermen received 50 cents per bushel; in 1904, 149,000 bushels, bringing 97 cents each; in 1921, 206,000 bushels, returning \$1.00 per bushel, and 1942, 169,000 bushels for which the fishermen received \$1.90 per bushel. However, in the later war years when much of the catch was sold in the black market, quotations very much higher were reported.

Very little is known of the biology of the sea scallop, and the possibilities of increasing production by a fishery management plan seem remote. In the case of the bay scallop there appear possibilities of transplanting the young or "seed" scallop to areas where stocks are low but conditions are favorable, and thus increasing the supply. As this species depends upon eel grass for shelter, conditions unfavorable to the growth of the eel grass in turn affect the supply of bay scallops. For example, a disastrous plant disease which killed off the eel grass in the 1930s resulted in a severe decline in this fishery. As the bay scallop spawn during the summer when they are one year old and do not live to spawn a second time, there is no advantage in affording protection to bay scallops which have spawned.

#### THE SEA MUSSEL (*MYTILUS EDULIS*)

The sea mussel is found along our North Atlantic coast southward to Cape Hatteras. Shortly after hatching the mussel attaches itself to material on the bottom by a slender thread or hair, the number of these attachments increasing with age and becoming shorter until the mussel becomes firmly attached to the object. Mussels multiply rapidly, sometimes forming dense beds over oysters on the bottom. When this happens, as they feed on essentially the same food as the oyster, they tend to smother the latter, exhausting the food



supply. When a heavy set of mussels is discovered on an oyster bed, the practice of harrowing the bed by dragging an ordinary dredge with the bag removed to crush the small mussels has sometimes been resorted to.

According to Ingersoll (l.c.) the most productive areas were the swift tideways of the inlets through Fire Island and the other beaches on the southern shore of Long Island, the channels about Sandy Hook and the inlets of the beaches between Barnegat and Cape May.

The catch in Long Island waters is of relatively little importance. In 1897, 3000 bushels were reported, valued at 32 cents per bushel to the fishermen; in 1904, nearly 16,000 bushels, bringing 28 cents per bushel; in 1921, 5000 bushels at 50 cents, and in 1942, 1200 bushels, returning 50 cents per bushel.

While in France and other parts of Europe the sea mussel is looked upon as a delicacy, its principal use in this country has been as bait for certain fishes. In 1941 and 1942, efforts were made to develop a fishery in Maine and Massachusetts as a food product. In 1942, about 15,000 pounds were canned increasing to 1.5 million pounds in 1943. The future of this venture appears uncertain.

#### THE LOBSTER (*HOMARUS AMERICANUS*)

The American lobster is one of our most highly prized sea-food delicacies occurring along our Atlantic Coast southward to Virginia. The catch has declined from about 30 million pounds in 1889 to between 9 and 14 million pounds in recent years. The catch returns between 2 and 3 million dollars to the fishermen annually. A great deal of study and experimentation has been made with conservation measures, including hatching and planting of the young lobsters, without achieving the desired results. While all States have minimum size limits, Maine also protects the large spawners by adopting a maximum size limit.

According to a report published in 1887, lobsters were once abundant in New York Bay and Hell Gate, but are now virtually extinct. Overfishing and pollution were alleged to have caused this.

In 1897, the catch accredited to New York was about 381,000 pounds, for which the fishermen received an average of 82 cents per pound; in 1904, 230,000 pounds, bringing \$1.17 per pound; in 1921, 1,037,000 pounds, returning \$1.90 per pound, and in 1942, 157,000 pounds, the fishermen receiving about \$2.50 per pound.



## CHAPTER XX

### *Long Island's Agriculture*

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LONG ISLAND is traditionally agricultural. Henry Hudson in 1609, writing of the men whom he sent ashore at the west end of the island, stated "They found the soil sandy and a vast number of plum trees loaded with fruit, many of them covered with grape vines of different kinds". Hudson reported the Canarsie Indians as an agricultural people. The white men who followed this explorer by a few years added to the evidence that although the Long Island Indians were adept at whaling and fishing and building canoes, they were primarily tillers of the soil. The Historian Wood early in the 1800s wrote that the first white men found great open spaces on the island where the natives had burned away the forest and the underbrush to make room for their vegetable gardens.

The Dutch director-general of New Netherland, of which western Long Island was a part for more than 50 years following Hudson's arrival, all reported that the island was most favorable for agricultural pursuits. It was the Dutch who soon after their first settlement in 1636, in what is now Brooklyn, inaugurated the growing of tobacco and soon thereafter a number of tobacco plantations were flourishing at the west end of the island.

Although a great part of the land was used for grazing cattle, from the very beginning the first settlers of Long Island raised vegetables, including maize or Indian corn, pumpkins and beans.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, Long Islanders not only raised vegetables for their own consumption, but transported them into New York, along with great loads of cordwood which was used as fuel in the fast-growing port on Manhattan Island. Long Island ships also carried many a cargo of Long Island vegetables to the West Indies with which trade was early established, bringing back rum and rare kinds of timber.

Long Island history is thus agricultural history from the very beginning. It is the oldest history of its kind in the State of New York. In western New York, beyond Preemption Line, it is a rarity to find land that has been farmed in the same family for one hundred years. In the Hudson Valley the tenure may be upped by fifty years, in the southern part a little more, but on Long Island it is known that in at least one instance land has been farmed in the same family descending from father to son for more than two hundred and ninety years. This is the Alfred Topping farm at Sagaponack. Together with the Howell farm at Wading River, and the farms now occupied by Kenneth and Vernon Wells at Riverhead, the Topping farm has been received into the distinguished Order of Century Farms, promul-

gated by the New York State Agricultural Society in token of continuous family ownership and operation for at least one hundred years. There are others on the island entitled to similar recognition.

Because the Topping farm, so far as is now known, represents the oldest continuous ownership and culture in the same family, not only on Long Island but in the State as a whole, it is worth while to include the citation prepared by Jared Van Wagenen, Jr., of Lawyersville, N. Y. in behalf of the New York State Agricultural Society. It was on January 22, 1941, that Mr. Van Wagenen in the presence of several hundred members of the Society thus addressed himself to Herbert H. Lehman, then Governor of the State:

“GOVERNOR LEHMAN: Perhaps not everyone will remember that the first English speaking settlement in New York State was not upon the mainland but on eastern Long Island. If history and accepted tradition be correct, it is now a year more than three full centuries since certain hardy Yankees, casting curious eyes to the faint shoreline across the Sound, went adventuring thither and within a few months established colonies almost simultaneously upon both the northern and southern shores. It may be insisted perhaps that it was something in the water or something in the air or something in the nearness of the gray sea which enabled them to take root and grow and persist as almost no other farm stock in America. It may have been these factors, but more believably it was because they were sprung from that dauntless Puritan breed. Only among the Dutch of the Hudson Valley and the Walloons and Huguenots of Ulster County do we find so many examples of long-time farm occupancy as are noted among these transplanted Yankees.

“Concerning the beginnings of this Topping Clan I can do no better than quote the unadorned, forthright phrases in a letter written by the present Chief of the Clan. He writes, ‘Thomas Topping came from Lynn, Massachusetts, between 1640 and 1644 and built a house on what is now South Main Street in the village of South Hampton and the house is still standing and in very good repair and is used as the Episcopal Rectory. When the allotment of land in Sagaponack was made on February 2nd, 1653, he got a lot which is now my farm and it has been in the family ever since down the years from father to son and I have a son with me now.’ In these two sentences he compresses the family history of three hundred years. It should also be said that this farm was located precisely in the region which by common consent has ever since been adjudged the choicest agricultural land on the Sunrise Isle. Perhaps this fortunate situation was due to his wisdom and foresight. More likely I think it was due to happy good fortune.

“As he has written, there is a son who has three children of his own and so it is there is no indication that the dynasty draws to a close. This long line of Toppings runs thus:



Thomas, Elnathan, Stephen, David, David the Second, Rensselaer, Sidney, Alfred and Alfred the Second. They have been on the whole a singularly vigorous longlived race so that it has required only eight generations to cover almost three hundred years. As I contemplate that long succession of men, who have been masters of the same acres, I say over once more the mouth-filling, sonorous, Old Testament phrase found again and again in the Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, 'And HE SLEPT WITH HIS FATHERS AND HIS SON REIGNED IN HIS STEAD,' I think of them and I remember what Lorimer has put into the letters of a self-made merchant written to his boy at Harvard. It runs like this: 'When a man goes out at night to put up the shutters for the last time, he will do it a great deal easier if he knows there is a son to take them down in the morning.' This greatest of blessings these Topping men have always known.

"The tiny hamlet of Sagaponack fronts on the Common as a transplanted New England village should. But the Common is unusual in that it has been made the village burial ground as well. So here

'Each in his narrow cell forever laid  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'

"I went out there in company with the present head of the house and saw how in orderly array beneath burial slabs not of white marble but of red Connecticut sandstone a great company of Topping men and women lie and wait. There is one marker there which symbolized tragedy. Always the Toppings have been farmers, but now and again as is so often the case on eastern Long Island, there have been sons of the clan who made it their business to go down to the sea in ships. In the 1840s one Oscar Johnson Topping sailed from Sag Harbor in command of a whaling ship, which dropped below the horizon and concerning whose course or fate no word ever came back. When after years all hope was taken away, they enumerated him among the dead and settled his temporal affairs and set up a stone in the family plot as a memorial to one who has made his grave in great waters.

"I greatly regret that time does not permit me to relate other tales both grave and gay. I have been received as a guest in the Topping home. I have looked upon these fields which have never known any ownership save theirs. I have read the epitaphs cut in the slabs that stand above their graves.

"GOVERNOR LEHMAN: I believe the dynasty of the Topping Clan of Sagaponack have been good farmers, upright citizens, devout churchmen for almost three centuries. So far as anything that has yet been brought to our attention would indicate, this family represents the longest unbroken farm proprietorship in America. In behalf of the New York State



Agricultural Society and its Committee on Century Farms, I recommend that you direct that their names be enrolled in the distinguished Order of Century Farmers."

In these latter days, new families with strange names are replacing the old stock which persists most of all on the East End and not so very much even there. But the farming is still done on old lands except for small areas cleared of scrub oak and pine and brought under the plow each year.

Long Island agriculture and Long Island climate denote a close kinship with the Atlantic Seaboard of the New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland region. Soils and growing seasons are similar, but the Island with deep water on both sides of the narrow spit of land has the more equable climate.

The types of agriculture on Long Island have been conditioned by natural factors, by the proximity of a great center of population and by a growing population of its own. The opening of the West, the great trek towards the Rockies and beyond are more than a national saga and campfire tale. They largely determined the metes and bounds of farming in Orient, Calverton and on Hempstead Plains, just as the agriculture of the nation has been persuaded or coerced by what has transpired in the Valley of the Nile or the Pampas of the Argentine.

At one time, substantial quantities of milk were produced and sent daily to New York City. But this is not a natural grazing country. Sods, meadows, and pastures are not readily maintained on light, sandy soils with frequent periods of dry weather from mid-summer on. Milk can be produced more readily and economically elsewhere. The returns per acre are too low for high-priced land. It is logical, therefore, that crops that can be grown on an intensive basis with high value and production per acre, frequently yielding two or three harvests from the same acre in a single season, should gradually replace crops of the extensive type with small returns per acre. Add to these specifications the desirability of growing highly perishable products, which must be consumed quickly to be at their best, close to the point of consumption, and one has the key to agricultural trends on Long Island.

How much such modern gadgets as deep freezing of fresh products and holding them in a comatose condition until they are plunked into boiling water or whatever the experts decree in readying them for the table, will influence future developments, none can disclose with certainty. It is evident that the range within which such products may be transported may be greatly increased, what with air freight and such goings on. But we are concerned here with history rather than prophecy. The author listened, not long ago, to a dissertation on "vine ripened" peaches, transported long distances by air and set down before the consumer with dew still on them. For aught he knows, peaches may grow on vines not long hence.

John Nicholson "Esquire" of Herkimer County stated in 1814 "Ashes are found more effective \* \* \* when applied to lands

near the ocean. The Long Island farmers can afford twelve cents a bushel for even leached ashes, while in Herkimer County they are suffered to be untouched''.

Long before John Nicholson's time, farmers were using fish as fertilizer. They learned to do so from the Indians. They improved upon and expanded the practice. Thousands of tons of menhaden were used for the purpose. An aroma that defies description lay like a blanket over the open fields till mercifully dissipated by vagrant breezes or more mercifully still, steady blows. Seaweed was used in like manner. Later came the well known commercial fertilizers now used in large quantities, frequently in excess of a ton per acre.

Speaking of the use of fish by the farmers of West Hills, Walt Whitman had this to say:

“Fish is one of the most powerful manures known, as under its influence the corn grows to astonishing height and size. I have thought indeed, that the fault among the farmers here was in putting too much of it, at a time, on their land. Like Macbeth's ambition, it overleaps itself and falls on the other side of fertility.”

Long Island crops are of the succulent type. They must grow quickly to be crisp and good. Soils are warm and hospitable. Add the necessary plant nutrients and let the rains fall, or possibly their equivalent through irrigation, control the pests and diseases and the soil will yield its increase. Farmers now experiment to determine how best to apply the fertilizer, over the entire area, in bands along the rows, at plow and root depth, whether in split applications several times through the season, etc. The Long Island Vegetable Research Farm at Baiting Hollow, an arm of Cornell University, established in 1922, is now aiding them in determining and applying scientific procedures.

In 1625 cattle were imported for breeding. In 1675 nearly all Long Island farms maintained herds of cattle including oxen, beef cattle, and dairy cows as well as substantial numbers of sheep and swine. The tax lists of ten towns recorded 4293 neat cattle, 1564 sheep, 1344 swine and 941 horses.

For the current generation it may be prudent to indicate that “neat” cattle refers to the bovine genus—cows, steers, oxen. Formerly it was a very common term both in the literature and the conversations of the time.

In 1675 the average number of cattle per farm was nine; largest herd reported was thirty-seven. By the time of the Revolution there were 7000 horned cattle and about the same number of sheep in the townships of Hempstead and Oyster Bay. Even in 1650 the Hempstead Plains were well populated with these animals. Cattle were pastured in common herds with “keepers” in charge. The keepers were bound by a signed covenant to devote all their time to the herds to keep them “carefully and faithfully and to watter them twice A day or onse at Least—to bring them home before sunesett at night”. Owners paid in proportion to the number they sent out.



Later, common pasture was leased to individual owners at April Town Meeting. The cattle were sold to butchers in New York and exported alive to the West Indies. In 1678 the City of New York consumed 400 beeves.

Sheep were maintained on the common lands throughout the season. The ceremony of "sheep parting" or dividing the flock and returning the animals to their owners each fall became a great event, a holiday. There was much eating and drinking, mending of political fences by the office hungry, shrewd bargaining and plenty of gossiping. No one wished to be absent and few were. In addition to Hempstead Plains, Montauk Point and Shinnecock Hills were important grazing areas.

Hogs were easily fattened by roaming in the woods and eating the nuts fallen from the trees. The oxen was the all important animal. He was used to draw the plow and the cart.

The livestock had to be protected from wild beasts. Wolves, foxes and wildcats were the chief menace. Rewards were paid for their heads. Finally the heads circulated so freely, claiming several rewards, that in one instance the whole animal was required to be skinned before the justice, the hunter to "make oath upon the holy Evangelists that he had killed it in Queens County."

The Dutch, English, and Huguenot settlers seemed always to be raising flowers and trees. The Dutch travelers who visited Long Island at the time of its settlement say of peach trees, "They were so laden that one might doubt whether there were more leaves or fruit on them". In 1776 peaches were so abundant in Flatbush that they lay ungathered under the trees. Insects and diseases took small toll and the trials of spraying and dusting were for a later day and generation.

It was a great day for Long Island when in 1737 William Robert Prince founded the Linnaeus Botanic Gardens at Flushing. Prince and his gardens became famous and are cited in all literature on the sources of American horticulture to this day. He introduced plant materials from many parts of the world and stimulated an interest in the art and practice of horticulture that has carried down through the years. He even attempted to promote a native silk industry by experimenting with the Chinese Mulberry tree. As early as 1763 a society was formed chiefly for the fostering of horticulture. In 1767 a premium of ten pounds was awarded to Thomas Young of Oyster Bay for a nursery of 27,123 apple trees. People believed in being exact in those days. Certificates were awarded to Joshua Clark and Francis Furrier of Suffolk County for success in cultivating the grape.

In 1798 the Bloodgood Nursery was started in Flushing; in 1838 Kissen Nurseries were started by Samuel and Robert Parsons; about 1854 Isaac Hicks started his nursery at Westbury. Its products have adorned many a Long Island landscape and it still serves.

The gathering and marketing of small fruits, strawberries, blackberries, and cranberries was once a business of some importance. In the central part of the Island blackberries and cranberries grew wild

in great profusion. "The growth and productiveness of the briars is greatly augmented by an occasional plowing of the ground, immediately after which in many instances, the crop of berries produced without further cultivation or care, will return much better profits than any ordinary field crop with all its necessary labor and expense". This is still good doctrine. The supply of cultivated fruits lessened the demand for wild fruits but blueberries and beach plums from woodland and seashore remain great delicacies to this day.

On the south side of the Island wintergreen plants were found in profusion. Women and children gathered them for market, whole wagonloads were collected and shipped to market by amateur speculators.

From William Robert Prince and those who followed in his train has come the nursery industry of many acres and 6,670,000 square feet under glass in 1940. Long Island is the natural seat of these phases of horticultural interest. Here and hereabouts people live in ever increasing numbers. They are intent upon beautifying their surroundings through lawns, trees, shrubs and gardens. Horticulture belongs to the healing arts in the broad view. A love of natural beauty, a sense of partnership in it, do not make for hatred and bigotry.

A newcomer to Long Island Agriculture is the bulb industry. It sprang from the Federal Quarantine Act of 1926. Prior to that date most of our bulbs were imported from Holland.

The industry has developed in the moist climate and sandy soil in the vicinity of Babylon although Ryneveld settled at Yaphank. Frylink & Son and K. Van Bourgondien & Sons, all of Dutch ancestry, have been among the leaders.

Daffodils are the new crop. Tulips, lilies and bulbous iris are also of importance. Gladioli, not a true bulb, are grown extensively. Perhaps 250 acres are now devoted to this new enterprise. Two hundred fifty acres of wheat or corn are inconsequential; 250 acres of bulbs with the high investment and heavy yields are quite another matter. It is a fair start toward big business. The product is deemed to be on a par with the offerings from Holland or from any other part of this country.

The growing of fruit in the commercial sense has never taken hold in any large way on Long Island. There are thriving orchards of peaches, apples and other fruits with ready markets at the farm. Suitable varieties on suitable soils and in suitable locations do very well indeed. But generally speaking, returns from annual crops have been too satisfactory for farmers to look with favor upon the period of waiting involved in producing fruit. Perhaps a hormone will be discovered which will change all this. There are veiled mysteries all about us. Some are down to the last veil.

There were other influential figures in addition to Prince. Ezra L'Hommedieu of Southold was one of these. He was a prominent member of the New York State Agricultural Society, probably the oldest agricultural society in America with a record of continuous activity for 114 years. He urged strongly the use of fish for ferti-



lizer. Rufus King, first ambassador to the Court of St. James took an active and prominent interest from his country home at Jamaica.

In later years Hal Fullerton sought to establish under the auspices of the Long Island Rail Road that the scrub oak and pine barrens on the saddle dividing much of Suffolk County north and south deserved a worthier place than had been accorded them. In 1905 at Wading River and in 1907 at Medford he established demonstration farms, beginning with the clearing of the land. He grew many products and grew them well. He strongly urged the planting of sugar beets as a major crop. *The Long Island Agronomist* was the organ through which the results were made known. No cost records were published. Sugar beets continue to be grown in areas of cheap and abundant labor. The soil, thin and frequently burned over, thus losing its mat of organic matter, has not been able to compete with more favored areas. Nevertheless, reclamation is gradually taking place as any careful observer may note as he travels the center Island highways. The greatest need has been moisture. With the development of deep well irrigation and liberal use of fertilizers, Hal Fullerton's dream may yet come true.

One aspect of the Kieft Patent granted to settlers of the Town of Hempstead by William Kieft, Dutch Governor in 1644, should be noted. It stipulated that the settlers should enrich the soil which they cultivated with "plough and howe" (harrow) through the use of manure and advised the "grasing and breeding of cattle" to insure a supply of butter and cheese. Jesse Merritt, Nassau County Historian, has found that the agricultural literature in the library of the U. S. Department of Agriculture discloses no other evidence of concern for the improvement and conservation of soil by a public agency or unit of government at so early a date.

While animal husbandry was flourishing, the settler used his slowly broadening fields for crop production—corn, rye, and wheat—later flax was added—also, barley, buckwheat, oats, and in a few places, tobacco.

The passing of the 17th century saw the primitive phase begin to come to an end. Long Island was coming into contact with the outside world. The opening of markets caused the disintegration of the self-sufficient type of agriculture. Men put out to sea, became weavers, hatters, tailors, brickmakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and coopers.

During the Revolutionary War a Tory advised a British minister to land the forces, destined for the subjugation of the colonies, on Long Island, "for", said he, "it is 130 miles long and is very fertile, abounding in wheat and every other kind of grain, and has innumerable black cattle, sheep, hogs, etc.; so that in this fertile island the army can subsist without any succor from England. It has a fertile plain 24 miles long, with a fertile country about it, and is 20 miles from New York \* \* \* the spot I advise you to land is at Cow Bay" (Manhasset).

The English army occupied Long Island with New York City as its headquarters for seven years and drew its supplies largely from the Island.

Washington toured a part of Suffolk County in 1756 and much of western Long Island in 1790. Preferably husbandman and country squire, his observations carefully recorded are meticulous and penetrating. Thus on April 24, 1790, under the heading of "Observations" he made notes as follows:

"This Island (as far as I went) from West to East seems to be equally divided between flat and Hilly land, the former on the South next the Seaboard, and the latter on the No. next the Sound. The highland they say is best and most productive, but the other is the pleasantest to work, except in wet seasons when from the levelness of them they are sometimes, (but not frequently having a considerable portion of Sand) incommoded by heavy and continual rains. From a comparative view of their crops they may be averaged as follows:—Indian Corn 25 bushels—Wheat 15—Rye 12—Oats 15 bushels to the acre. According to their accts. from Lands highly manured they sometimes get 50 of the first, 25 of the 2d and 3d, and more of the latter.

"Their general mode of Cropping is,—first Indian Corn upon a lay, manured in the hill, half a shovel full in each hole—(some scatter the dung over the field equally)—2d. Oats and Flax—3d. Wheat with what manure they can spare from the Indian Corn land—with the Wheat, or on it, towards close of the Snows, they sow Clover from 4 to 6 lb; and a quart of Timothy Seed. This lays from 3 to 6 years according as the grass remains, or as the condition of the ground is, for so soon as they find it beginning to bind, they plow. Their first plowing (with the Patent tho' they call it the Dutch plow) is well executed at the depth of about 3 or at most 4 inches—the cut being 9 or 10 Inches and the sod neatly and very evenly turned. With Oxen they plough mostly. They do no more than turn the ground in this manner for Indian Corn before it is planted; making the holes in which it is placed with hoes the rows being marked off by a stick—two or three workings afterwards with the Harrows or Plough is all the cultivation it receives generally. Their fences, where there is no Stone, are very indifferent; frequently of plashed trees of any and every kind which have grown by chance; but it exhibits an evidence that very good fences may be made in this manner either of white Oak or Dogwood which from this mode of treatment grows thickest, and most stubborn.—This however, would be no defence against Hogs."

Toward the end of the 18th century farming methods had changed little since pioneer times. Farms were of 100 to 150 acres, fenced with rails or posts; some places had hedges of old England. The cattle grazed over the pastures. Growing on the fields were wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, flax, and common grass (cut for hay). The extent of fertilization was a little manure and menhaden fish.



After the Revolution farmers became aware of the value of better cultivation, the possibilities of a greater variety of crops, the breeding of a higher type of livestock than the lean cows and "rat-tailed" sheep which grazed the Hempstead Plains and Montauk Moors. All this came about largely through the efforts of Ezra L'Hommedieu, previously mentioned, William Cobbett and Elkannah Watson.

Ezra L'Hommedieu was a New York lawyer and a Long Island farmer. During the Revolution he represented his state in Continental Congress. In *Transactions—Observations on Manures*, by Ezra L'Hommedieu, Esq., March, 1795:

"I have heard of no instance of new land producing more wheat than 42 bushels to the acre. In Suffolk County, Huntington, some years ago, by manure 52 bushels were raised to the acre. \* \* \* A farmer, Riverhead, Suffolk Co., Mr. Downs, having 5,000 fish called mossbonkers or menhaden strewed them about the 1st of June on 20 rods of ground, a poor, gravelly, dry soil which without manure would not pay for tillage. These fish were plowed under a shallow furrow. At the time of sowing about the last of September, the ground was sown with rye at the rate of one bushel to the acre. In the spring the growth was rapid, 9 inches high. The neighbors' sheep broke in the inclosure and ate it all off close to the ground. The fence was mended and the rye grew again, much thicker than before, 6 inches high. The same sheep broke in again and the second time ate it close to the ground. It was then supposed the crop would be lost, but it grew up again with additional thickness. \* \* \* Mr. Downs assures me he had 16 bushels of rye from his 20 rods of ground. \* \* \*"

Robert R. Livingston of the Hudson Valley Livingstons introduced the element of rotation. New root crops were brought in—beets and turnips. In 1817 William Cobbett, an English Dissenter, who was living in exile on Long Island, tried to bring about the general use of turnips. These men did not stop at new crops; they tried to get to the root of the evil—dissipation of soil fertility. They were early apostles of the modern program of soil conservation. Books were written, papers and articles were published by the press.

In 1811 Elkannah Watson completed the organization of the Berkshire Agricultural Society. It was responsible for the county fairs. Every year the Society had an exhibition of the best products of the locality. Prizes were awarded for the best crops—butter, cheese, cloth, and animals. At the end of the day a general assembly was held in the local church and the prizes were awarded. In 1817 the Berkshire organization came to Long Island. This movement was of great interest to the women of the farming communities. The Berkshire system was the first great movement for better conditions among small farmers. It played an important part in the evolution of American Agriculture as did the Grange, beginning in the 60s and 70s.

Some of the seeds of these agricultural reforms fell on sterile ground. The influence of the west had much to do with this. Many families from the shore villages of Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay went westward. But some of the seed fell on good ground. The arts of husbandry did make progress.

The end of the 18th century saw the ocean a great highway to and from New York. Along the shores of Long Island could be seen fleets of sturdy little sailing vessels, moored at "landings". These "landings" were the centers from which produce was hauled.

The opening of the 19th century saw new crops. In 1850 the head of every family in Flatbush was, with few exceptions, a farmer.

The cultivation of grain and the keeping of four-footed animals was less remunerative when the canals and railroads opened up western lands. As an illustration of what was taking place, Suffolk County grew 18,000 acres of corn for grain in 1879 and nearly 10,000 acres of wheat. The latest census figures available list 1200 acres of corn and 800 acres of wheat. This is agrarian revolution so gradual and peaceful as to be noted only by the statistician and student. Such changes will doubtless continue as men seek to adjust themselves to new conditions.

By degrees the whole character of Island agriculture changed. Flatbush farmers began to raise vegetables to supply the markets of New York and Brooklyn.

Philip Freneau, the bard of the Revolution, wrote of "The Market Girl":

"At Dawn of day, from short repose,  
At hours that might all townsmen shame,  
To catch our money, round or square,  
She from the groves of Flatbush came  
With kail and cabbage, fresh and fair."

Nearly all the produce raised within 25 miles of New York was carted in with teams by the proprietors in the night. The larger part was sold at wholesale to dealers or middle men, between midnight and daylight, chiefly within the vicinity of Washington Market. In 1879 a market was established in the vicinity of W. 12th St. and 10th Ave. Those who did not sell at retail stayed until daylight when the retail trade began. The grocers came for daily supplies. The produce which was sent by water or rail was consigned to commission dealers.

The Long Island Rail Road opened in 1836; in 1844 it reached out to Greenport. At long last the farmers' transportation problem seemed settled. What had taken days by boat or cart now took hours.

"The writer (Peter Ross) would gladly whisper in the ear of many large land holders that there is a great deal more profit in cultivating one acre of land well, than in 10 acres of land badly. The fact is, many on Long Island own and work too much land. The writer (Peter Ross) has in his mind's eye a farm of nearly 1000 acres, which half a



century ago (1852) was owned and cultivated under the direction of a single individual, who was called a great farmer. But when he had ruined himself by the operation of the farm and had surrendered the whole to pay his debts (as honest, but unfortunate men were in the habit of doing in old times) it was cut up and sold to six or eight persons, who have since supported as many families from its production.

“But it is not intended by these remarks to convey the idea that all the farmers of old Suffolk are regardless of the improvements made in agriculture, or that they are in the habit of taxing their fields without furnishing them the means of answering the demand. More or less attention has long been paid to the importance of manuring. Water with which they are surrounded furnish a large amount of fertilizer—seaweed and various other productions of bays and marshes.”

The land on the western end of the Island became too scarce and valuable to hold for pasturage. Now the city which brought in the truck farmers has crowded them out. Fields once too valuable for pasturage are becoming too valuable for any kind of farming. Only specialized market garden farms with high production and return per acre, only these and farms under glass have been able to survive.

Duck farming was begun on the South Shore around Moriches about 60 years ago. Now, the Long Island duck is shipped from coast to coast and in 1921 the Long Island Duck Growers Association was formed for cooperative buying and selling of supplies.

According to Jesse Merritt, Nassau County Historian, Queens Agricultural Society (now Queens-Nassau) was organized June 21, 1819, with Rufus King, Singleton Mitchell, William Jones, Theodore Phillips and Daniel Kissan as its officers.

The Suffolk Agricultural Society was organized in 1842 and reorganized in 1843. “In 1869 The Board of Managers of the Suffolk Agricultural Society voted to purchase four acres of land north of the Riverhead fair grounds from Allen T. Terrill, Henry L. Griffing and J. Henry Perkins for \$100. A hog guessing contest was conducted at B. F. Wells’ hotel, Mattituck. There were 210 guesses at 50 cents each, and three hit the exact weight of the animal, 598 pounds. The hog was raised by David Tuthill of Jamesport.”

Horse racing was a major interest at the fairs and Long Island has a notable history in this field. It constitutes a saga in itself.

The development of the poultry business on Long Island is best considered in two phases—the production of market eggs, and the growing of broilers. Market egg production has experienced a steady growth for many years, the trend somewhat paralleling the increase in population. Poultry farms on Long Island, as in much of the sea-coast areas from Maine to Maryland, are highly specialized, deriving 95% or more of their income from poultry products, and catering to the demands of large city consumers who are extremely quality conscious. Local poultry farmers buy practically all their

feed, grade their eggs carefully, and sell at the top of the market, either directly or through hucksters, local stores or operators of retail routes. This type of business is successful and stable for a region of concentrated population and high land values. As my father would say, "It is wheat in the mill", meaning that it is sound and good.

The business revolves around the single comb White Leghorn hen. The "heavies", however, are not to be ruled out. Rhode Island Red, New Hampshire, Barred Plymouth Rock and crosses of Reds and Rocks giving the "black cross" are increasing. Brown eggs sell just as well or almost as well to local trade and many egg farmers do a good business in dressed fowl at certain seasons. They prefer the more meaty birds.

Nassau County had been falling off somewhat in egg production, up until 1940. It has since experienced a sudden upsurge, which probably will not be permanent. Suffolk County, and the total for the two counties, exhibit a steady upward trend:

	Number dozen eggs (thousands)			
	1880	1890	1930	1945
Total .....	911	1,417	2,206	3,386

Until the middle nineteen-thirties, the production of broilers was not a specialized business, and followed a course similar to that of egg production. Most of the broilers produced were a by-product of the growing of pullets for egg production. In 1930, less than 1% of the chickens grown were produced on farms specializing in broiler production; in 1940, specialized broiler farms produced about half of the chickens grown, and by 1945 three times as many chickens were produced by the broiler growers as by other poultrymen. The tendency is toward larger operations, handling upwards of 20,000 broilers at a time, growing them to weights of 3½ lbs. mostly sold alive at the farm. One grower, Wendell Still of Selden produces about 120,000 broilers each year on his three farms. Several growers produce from 50,000 to 100,000 annually. In 1930 the two counties produced 487,000 broilers; in 1945, 2,888,000. The more efficient producers will probably continue to compete effectively with producers in sections more distant from the metropolitan market. Long Island costs of production are higher than elsewhere, and to some extent the abnormal conditions of the war years have supported this rapid development in broiler growing. The competitive position of the broiler men under postwar conditions seems less secure than that of producers of eggs.

Among Long Island poultrymen are a number of breeders of good production stock, one large hatchery, and several smaller ones. However, quantities of baby chicks and hatching eggs are brought in from New England and other states. These phases of the poultry business are subordinate here to the production of eggs and meat for market, which by and large seems to provide the most satisfactory returns for those engaged in poultry farming in this area. A broiler man has a vocabulary of his own. He talks of Rock-Red



crosses and reciprocal crosses and knows what he is talking about. This is not a treatise on genetics. Suffice it to say that crosses seem to give greater vigor, more rapid growth, and greater weight at a certain age than the purebreds.

In these latter days, with diseases under control we are getting back into the turkey business. There were no turkeys to speak of on the Island ten years ago. In 1944 Nassau County had 12,000 and Suffolk nearly 28,000. We have almost enough to supply our Thanks-



*Long Island Potato Scene*

giving dinners, one to every 17 residents of the two counties, enough surely if the birds are big enough. One of the largest turkey ranches in the East is at Port Jefferson with 3000 breeders. The wild ancestors of these birds must have loved it here what with the chestnuts and cover and salubrious climate. We cannot bring them back because we cannot restore the environment that made them happy but it is good to have this majestic bird even in a less romantic edition once more part of the Long Island scene.

Even the Hamptons were decidedly farm conscious fifty years ago. Said the *East Hampton Star* in its issue of February 28, 1896.

“One thing Amagansett farmers would like to know, and badly, too, is how to grow a kind of potato that will net them



more than 30 cents a bushel. \* \* \* This week about a dozen empty freight cars passed through here enroute for Promised Land where they are to be loaded with Tuthill's produce. Six carloads of fertilizer were shipped from Ellsworth Tuthill's factory Wednesday morning."

Is Long Island agriculture disappearing? No, but its nature is changing. In Nassau County the agriculture is typically one of



(Photo Courtesy of F. Kull)

*Potato Crop Scene*

market crops in succession plantings, with many nursery and greenhouse developments, and a substantial potato acreage. In Suffolk there is a very large development of potatoes and cauliflower with truck crops fitting in, plus the greenhouse and nursery crops. Suffolk is one of the most important and productive agricultural counties in the State. Many do not appreciate this fact. The two counties taken together constitute the outstanding potato area in the State and the only one which is increasing in acreage and production. The latest census figures (1944) list 13,332 acres of potatoes in Nassau and 52,000 acres in Suffolk County against 9000 and 33,000 respectively ten years earlier. Yields vary with the season, chiefly with the amount and distribution of rainfall.

The season of 1946 saw many acres produce 400 bushels of U. S. No. 1 tubers. The total yield was the largest on record. In unfavorable seasons the yield will be cut in half, so no one need get out his pencil and figure long-time returns on an average yield of 400 bushels.



Fertilizer, spraying, tillage, seed and overhead costs do not decrease with decreasing yields. The farmer is worthy of his hire and frequently more. Over 10,000 acres of potatoes in Suffolk County are now under irrigation from deep well pumps supplying portable systems between the rows. It is worth a trip along Sound Avenue in Riverhead Town during May and June to see the jets of water against the sky, to marvel at the ingenuity of man and the responsiveness of nature. Henry Talmage of Friar's Head Farms, Baiting Hollow, tells of what he regards as the beginning of the commercial potato industry on Long Island:

"My first recollection of working is of dropping potatoes on a little farm at Westhampton. I was ten years old. Potato planters were unheard of. I had to stick them into the side of a furrow. They were plowed in. The potato beetle had just become a pest on Long Island. We did not know how to combat it. Father paid my sister and me one cent a hundred for the old shell back bugs and a nest of eggs counted the same as a bug. We earned our fire cracker money in that year that way.

"That fall we moved to the farm where I now live. The farm had been in pasture for many years. The next spring we planted four acres of potatoes, in tough sod. Strange to say they grew fine. Father saw an ad of a potato digger from way out in Iowa. He wrote for a price and got a letter stating he would get a special reduced price if he would exhibit it at the County Fair.

"He exhibited it at the fair and S. Terry Hudson, who had a farm machinery manufacturing plant on the site of Maxim Bobinski's present potato and machinery business, made very careful inspection and drawings of the digger and the next year came out with an improved digger. It was a double mouldboard style, with rods in place of solid mouldboards.

"The potato digger was the first special machine to be used in growing potatoes and made possible the growing of potatoes in a larger way.

"When we came to dig our crop that fall they turned out 300 bu. per acre. Our neighbors came to see the wonderful crop and asked father 'What will you ever do with so many potatoes?' From that you can draw your own inference of the importance of the potato crop at that time."

From this to 65,000 acres in one man's lifetime!

Some decry the "one-crop system" whereby potatoes are grown on the same land year after year. But it is not really a one-crop system, for rye is sown after the crop is harvested and plowed under before planting in the spring. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that yields are increasing from year to year under this system. It is difficult to condemn a system that brings home the bacon—or in this case, the potatoes. A well grown Long Island potato is a

delicious thing—an aristocrat of its kind. It is the partner of home-made bread and there should be more of both.

Long Island cauliflower (really Suffolk County) needs no encomium. With acreage and production increasing there is no occasion for an epitaph. Some restricted areas in the Catskills are the only rivals of Suffolk lands in presenting this offering of creamy succulence and beauty. There is room for the products of both sections. Incidentally, more and more cauliflower is finding favor in



(Photo Courtesy of F. Kull)

*Potato Crop Scene*

the raw. Try it just as you would a radish and be convinced. Said Francis Brill in 1872, "Where this vegetable does well, there is certainly no crop which will pay a larger profit. For the past two years the farmers of the east end of Long Island, especially about the village of Mattituck, have planted largely of cauliflower, being incited by the successful experiments of some who have removed here from the west end, who were formerly engaged in growing vegetables for New York markets."

Percentage of Nassau County area in farms is decreasing as the city pushes eastward and new communities come into being and old ones reach out. But cropping is more intensive and yields are greater than ever. There is much land on the Island still to be brought into



production of some intensive specialized type when conditions are favorable.

There is more cooperative effort in Island agriculture than ever before and there will be still more in the future. The Nassau County Farm Bureau, sponsored by Elwood Titus, pioneer in the cooperative movement, came in 1914; the Suffolk County Farm Bureau in 1917. These are self-help organizations with individual farmer memberships and trained agents or leaders as their hired men. Here, too, are the Home Bureaus of both counties and the 4H organizations for boys and girls. In 1912 came the Institute of Agriculture at Farmingdale, now under a broadened program, the Long Island Agricultural and Technical Institute. All these agencies seek in various ways to enrich, broaden, and dignify rural life and living.

There are or have been many other groups and agencies serving the same general purpose—the Grange with a program for the entire family, the Long Island Farmers Club, Long Island Duck Growers Association, Long Island Poultrymen's Association, Long Island Cauliflower Association, one of the most successful of all farm cooperatives; Long Island Horticultural Society, Long Island Nurseryman's Association, The G. L. F. (Grange-League-Federation-Coop Assn., Inc.) with its local outlets furnishing farm supplies; Long Island Farmers Institute, garden clubs galore and many, many others. There is even a Long Island Goat Association and the rabbit growers are organized. Why not? And there will be others. The whole American public has learned how to organize and join. There is still much to be learned about execution and the responsibility to do something more than join. But farm people are learning.

About twenty years ago *The American Agriculturist*, one of the leading farm papers of the Northeast established its order of "Master Farmers." Its purpose has been to recognize men who have not only achieved well in the practices of husbandry but who have set high standards of family life and community service. Back of it all has been the desire to dignify agriculture as a way of life. The movement is chiefly symbolic. No claim is made that all worthy recipients have been named or any large number of them. Nevertheless the following Long Islanders have been so honored and all Long Island with them:

Henry Talmage—Riverhead . . . . .	1928
E. E. Boisseau—Southold . . . . .	1928
Harold Simonson—Glen Head . . . . .	1933
William Loudon—Hempstead . . . . .	1935

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"For climate and geographic reasons Long Island became a garden and ultimately developed into one of the richest garden areas in America. As the old range of low-lying hills that made up the first Long Island supports the tumbled glacial deposits that later eras have piled upon them, so the farmer, who was the first Long Islander, still supports the life that later generations have called into being."

## CHAPTER XXI

### *The Presbyterian Church on Long Island*

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LONG ISLAND is a home of old churches. Excepting Caroline Church, at Setauket, the Bowne and Matinecock Quaker Meetings and such Dutch churches as those at New Utrecht and Flatbush, all the oldest churches are now Presbyterian. It is only of the Presbyterian churches that have passed from one to three century-marks that this chapter will treat.

In respect to things physical theirs is a story of massive hewn timbers, community frame-raising, hand-rived cypress shingles, shingle-nails wrought of material separated from the iron-bearing sands of Long Island beaches; of hitching-posts, carriage-sheds, early eighteenth century bells, elaborate weather-vanes, perpendicular sundials and bubble-glass windows; of box pews, high pulpits, rush-bottom pulpit furniture, whale-oil lamps, pitch-pipes and ancient Communion tables and silver, many of these items being still preserved and even in use.

In relation to things of the spirit this is an account of altar-fires that through more than three centuries have never failed; of a people of English and Puritan—rarely of French and Huguenot—antecedents who sought in New England asylum from persecution and shortly migrated to Long Island, discovering here a place where with greater convenience they could work out their Biblically derived ideas of religious and political independence. That in comparison with their New England background they exhibited here a degree of religious tolerance rather uncommon in Colonial times, that they believed that the native Indians had souls and instituted successful missionary work among them, and that they were duly appreciative of the value of general education and especially concerned to have a well educated clergy are facts readily demonstrable and generally agreed upon among historians. Here the Quakers were not usually molested by earlier settlers. Only three cases of witchcraft were tried here and not one was severely sentenced (Prime). Only when established or state religion sought to impose authority over or insinuate itself into the independent town churches were the congregations aroused to extremes of resistance (The First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, Winans; pp. 32-34). Even so, there were instances, as in Brookhaven township, in which in mutual accommodation a Lord of Manor and his Lady were assigned, before the Church of England had its own building there, a place of prominence close to the pulpit.

Partly because from 1640 to 1662, "no power on earth laid claim to any part of eastern Long Island" the early English settlers of that section presumably felt that they owed allegiance to no government



but such as they themselves should set up. At any rate they so acted. Connecticut being more accessible than New York, and much more friendly, their several towns welcomed an alliance or jurisdictional affiliation with its colonies and continuing relations with its Congregational churches. This they preferred to compliance with the capricious orders of provincial governors and acknowledgment of the authority of a crown-constituted ecclesiastical system. They would make their towns "little republics", but church governed. No one but a church member was to be permitted to hold office. In some towns only church members would be allowed to vote. The atmosphere of what would be virtually a theocratic rule would inevitably modify political opinion. It did. In hardly more than forty years after their first settlement of Long Island, and almost a hundred years before the Declaration of Independence, these Puritans made, in 1681, their formal though unavailing protest against the injustice of taxation without representation, in an attempt to procure redress of their grievances under "the arbitrary rule" of Sir Edmund Andros, Governor of the Province of New York. (See any early history of Long Island.) Their hope for justice was definitely of religious origin and sanction.

These people were imbued with the tradition of Protestants who had cast off prelatical authority and, in need of another, had turned to a Book every word of which was divinely inspired, literally inerrant, universally and eternally binding. The modern conception of the Bible as a progressive revelation, comprising parts of unequal value, had entered no one's mind. Rather, it was a compendium of ready reference for ordering specifically the conduct of the community after a scriptural pattern, citing book, chapter and verse.

From ancient, mutilated and sometimes illegible town records of Southampton Nathaniel Prime made, apparently, his own abstracts of the laws of that colony as follows in part:

"If any man's swine, or any other beast, or a fire kindled by a man, damage another's field, he shall make full restitution for the grain and time lost in securing the swine, etc. Exod. XII. 5, 6,—Lev. XXIV. 18."

"Drunkenness, as transforming God's image into a beast, is to be punished with the punishment of a beast. Prov. XXVI. 3. A whip for a horse—and a rod for a fool's back."

Fornication was punishable with "(a) a fine or penalty to the father, (b) with marriage of the maid, if she and her father consent, (c) with stripes, 'for this is a real slander. It is worse to make a harlot, than to say one is a harlot'."

Evidently the "shot-gun wedding"—blunderbuss or muzzle loader—or its equivalent, had no standing, nor did the "unwritten law". The case was to be disposed of by the magistrate upon the evidence submitted. But the view that the law took of such a marriage as a "punishment", even when the father and the girl consented, appears to have unwittingly anticipated and perhaps paved the way for modern appreciation of the impracticability of a misalliance.

Also the statute suggests emphasis upon a Biblically patriarchal structure of the family, for of the mother's understanding of the matter there is no mention.

Crimes deserving capital punishment were such as blasphemy, Deut. XXIV. 15; idolatry, Deut. XVII. 3-5; profaning the Lord's Day, Num. XV. 30-36; rebellion, sedition, insurrection. Rebellious children merited death. Also, of course, adulterers, man-stealers, and any who bore false-witness against life.

That there was seldom any need for enforcement of severe penalties was due largely to the character of these Bible nourished settlers. At worst an Indian who carried "a burden through the town"—Easthampton—on the Sabbath Day might get off with a whipping. But a white man similarly offending might be put in the stocks, the penalty enforced in Huntington. Another factor in maintaining order was the custom of excluding undesirable persons seeking homes in any of the towns. With respect to the unknown and not yet commended, caution was the invariable rule. There was a six months' period of probation. Restrictions were based less upon religious distinctions than upon considerations of probity, stability and general fitness for assimilation. The Quaker, Thomas Powell, was among inhabitants of Huntington in 1666. Though he conscientiously and repeatedly protested against taxation for the support of a town minister he was highly esteemed for his character and—an exception to the rule—held at one time or another the office of overseer, assessor and recorder and was made a commissioner to represent the town in various public matters.

There was little delay in organizing churches, in the simple form of pastor and people. The twenty-nine Davises, Hortons, Beebes, Corwins, *et al*, who rowed themselves, their families, their simple household goods and farm implements, from the Connecticut shore to the North Fork of the east end of Long Island in a flat-bottom scow, in 1640, brought their minister with them; unless it be said that he, being their leader, brought them. He was the Rev. John Youngs, originally from Southwold, England, and the son of its vicar, Rev. Christopher Youngs. In October of that year, a council of New Haven churches endorsed the organizing of the church at Southold—a name indicative of a later prevalence of phonetic shortening—giving this church its stout claim to chronological priority. But also in 1640, a group of Puritans left Lynn, Massachusetts, for Long Island, setting up first in the western part, Abraham Pierson, their minister, being with them. Driven out by the Dutch Governor, Kieft, they moved bag and baggage to the east end and founded Southampton, apparently in the same year.

Easthampton's first house of worship was erected in 1652; but previously the townspeople had held service in a rented "ordinary", their first minister, the Rev. Thomas James, listed among early settlers, undoubtedly officiating. The Rev. Richard Denton "was in charge of a Presbyterian congregation at Hempstead" as early as 1644. In 1657, the inhabitants of Setauket voted that when there should be thirty families in residence 60 pounds would be made available for a minister's salary. In 1665, that seat of the town of



Brookhaven settled Rev. Nathaniel Brewster. Newtown, in 1651, was still shaping into a small colony and in 1660 the first church building was erected; but, according to some, not until 1670, when William Leverich, formerly minister in Huntington, was called, had Newtown's organized church a settled minister. There is, however, record of a ministry of Rev. Francis Doughty among "Englishmen" at Newtown as early as 1641, and at Flushing in 1645, when that town received its patent.

In his *American Presbyterianism*, Dr. Charles A. Briggs listed "John Youngs as the first Puritan Presbyterian minister in what is now New York State; Abraham Pierson as second; Francis Doughty as third; Joseph Fordham, of Hempstead and Southampton as fourth, and Richard Denton as fifth" (Eells)

Thomas James, the first pastor in Easthampton, was in residence there at a very early date, if not among the first eight families to remove from Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1648, to found Maidstone, the name they gave the town that became Easthampton some four or five years later. Huntington was settled in 1653 and its church was organized in 1658 with William Leverich as its pastor. He was an ordained missionary sent to work among Indians by the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, now familiarly known as the S. P. G. The minutes of a town meeting held in Jamaica in 1662 make record of a tax-levy for building a "minister's house". The minister was Zechariah Walker, a licentiate who labored with good success in Rustdorp, as Jamaica was then known. Richard Smith of Smithfield, later Smithtown, acquired his patent to lands along the Nissequogue from Governor Nicoll in 1665, on condition that within three years ten families should be resident there, and it is not unlikely that divine worship was held there from the beginning. The Rev. George Phillips, the second settled Presbyterian minister in Brookhaven, was established there in 1697, and it was stipulated in his contract that he have charge also in Smithtown. The Bridgehampton church was organized about 1695.

Thus it appears that in the territory inclusive of what are now Kings, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, nine churches had been formed before the close of the 17th century, some of them having definitely Presbyterian predilections, all of them later to be organized under the Presbyterian system and united in Presbyteries, all of them to this day carrying on in vigor, several of them in service so conspicuous as to have achieved nation-wide fame. In 1695, the Rev. John Miller reported nine in Suffolk County and five in Queens.

As to a proper nomenclature for these earliest churches there is some divergence of opinion. Alluding to changes inaugurated in the Easthampton church in 1799, when he was installed there as pastor, Lyman Beecher wrote: "I persuaded them, and we organized a good, strong, noble Session. \* \* \* Presbytery did not care much. They were all Connecticut men. The churches did not care. They were all Congregational, at first, every church on the Island. Afterwards they changed to Presbyterianism, without any particular influence. There was none of that foolishness about 'isms' which has been got up lately".

Mershon, pastor at Easthampton in 1865, questioned advisedly the accuracy of some of Beecher's characterizations. In the opinion of later students, typified by E. E. Eells (Easthampton, 1936), the churches at Hempstead, Newtown, Southold and Southampton were "more Presbyterian than anything else, and deserve to be named as the oldest Presbyterian churches in America, after honoring the Dutch church on Manhattan".

The Southold church was organized with the sanction of a Council of Congregational churches gathered from the vicinity of New Haven. Though several of its ministers were ordained Presbyterian clergymen it maintained local congregational control of its affairs until 1832, when it united with the Presbytery of Long Island. In these respects certainly it had been Congregational. In others of these original churches, in one until 1748, there was little evidence of the use of distinctively Presbyterian forms of government. There were no Elders, to form a Session. So, of course, there were no Session records. It is to town records, instead, that historians must look for an account of "calls" to ministers, appropriations for their support, the setting aside or purchase of the "parsonage" land, the building of a minister's house, or provision for erecting a church. Not only were there no Sessions; there were no Presbyteries. The first record of a meeting of a Presbytery in the American Colonies was dated December 27, 1706, at Freehold, New Jersey. (Briggs)

By the same token there is little evidence upon which to base a belief that most of these churches adopted a distinctively Congregational polity. They did not always have Deacons. They formed no permanent Council of Churches, though sometimes joining churches of Connecticut in a special Council, as in the meeting that ordained Ebenezer Prime as Colleague Pastor in Huntington in 1723. Their association with the Hartford or New Haven church Councils was somewhat casual. There was on Long Island no association even remotely resembling a permanent Council until 1791, when as a result of a period of "revivalism" some of the "Congregationalists", separating from the old churches, formed a "Long Island Conference" which survived but a few years. The early Long Island churches were not so closely related to any mainland organization that they did not feel free wholly to separate themselves when an opportunity should be afforded. If it be insisted that they be called Congregational the term should be understood as descriptive of a local town-church or, later, a solely autonomous church control. Several historians have more happily employed the word "Independent" to characterize their initial status. What, then, are the reasons for supposing that any were "more Presbyterian than anything else"? (Eells)

*First:* At its earliest opportunity for submitting a call to the pastorate to the jurisdiction of a Presbytery the church at Jamaica referred a call to the Rev. George McNish to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, five years after that body had been organized. Ten years after that "first Presbytery in America" came into being the Southampton church was in correspondence with its Clerk for an



identical purpose. In consequence of this the Presbytery of Long Island was "set off from the Presbytery of Philadelphia" in the Southampton church in 1717 and given jurisdiction over the uniting Island churches, as also the churches of New York and Westchester. By the middle of the 18th century (1748) all the stronger churches (except Southold) and some of those organized after 1700—Easthampton, Southampton, Bridgehampton, Huntington, Aquebogue, Cutchogue and others—had entered into permanent connection with a Presbytery and a Synod. Had there been no predisposition or leaning toward the Presbyterian form of government such a general migration would hardly have occurred.

*Second:* There was a natural inclination toward Presbyterianism. To quote from Dr. Frank Kerr's *Rev. Richard Denton and the Coming of the Presbyterians*: "It is common for us in America to refer to the Pilgrim and Puritan as synonymous both in expression and meaning. There was much in common on the part of the settlers in New England; but there was a distinction between them upon the idea and genius of church government. The Pilgrim became identified with the 'separate' movement, which looked in the direction of the independency of each church. \* \* \* The Puritan, however, was enthusiastic about the Presbyterian polity of Geneva and made every effort to have it adopted by the Church of England. \* \* \* He desired to have the Bishops replaced by Presbyters and to simplify the ritual. \* \* \* The Puritan aim \* \* \* was favorable to Parliament as against the claim of the King for his 'divine right' in government". In the resulting conflict a population of some 21,000 was "squeezed" out of England between 1620 and 1640, to find in New England room to develop free institutions, both civil and ecclesiastical; but among this number, according to the estimate of Cotton Mather (Hanzsche), more than 4000 held Presbyterian views of church government. Many of these were swept into the stronger tide of Congregationalism. Some who stemmed the tide organized the Presbyterian churches of New England. Others formed a determinative part of the migration to Long Island before the close of the 17th century.

Cambridge University had been the "intellectual center" of the movement in England toward changes in church government after the Genevan model. It was in that university that several of the ministers who settled earliest on Long Island received their training and degrees. It was there that they were imbued with the new spirit of freedom and reform. William Leverich, first minister in Huntington, took his B.A. in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1625, his M.A. in 1629. Richard Denton, first minister at Hempstead, was graduated from Cambridge in 1623. Early in the 1700s, this Cambridge influence toward Presbyterianism was strongly complemented by the coming of George McNish as Pastor of the Jamaica church in 1712. He had been a student at the University of Glasgow and, upon arriving in America, had settled first in Maryland and was one of the first members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. He was of Scottish or Scotch-Irish ancestry and had been intimately associated with Francis

Makemie, who hailed from a Presbytery in Ireland and had come to Maryland by way of the Barbados in 1683. Makemie is commonly thought of as the Father of Presbyterianism in America. If Presbyterianism on Long Island had more than one father, George McNish might well share some of the honor with Richard Denton, or any other claimant.

As Prime has it: "The settlement of Mr. McNish as pastor of this church (Jamaica, about that time probably becoming associated with the Presbytery of Philadelphia) furnishes the sure date of the introduction of Presbyterianism, in its distinct forms, on Long Island". Though he lived in Jamaica until his death, 1722-23, McNish appears never to have preached in "The Old Stone Church" which, when he arrived, "was in the hands of the Church of England"; but he ministered in pulpits elsewhere and his influence upon the Rev. Samuel Pomeroy (Pumry), pastor at Newtown, appears to have led to the latter's acceptance of membership in the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1715, taking his congregation with him.

*Third:* Toward the end of the first century an earlier peaceful tenor of religion in the "independent" churches of Long Island was interrupted by issues and disturbances in which isolated religious groups discovered a need to coordinate their common interests and vest their security in some form of corporate union more cohesive than any of which they had had experience in the somewhat desultory connection they had sustained with New England Congregationalism. They could get along with Quakers. They could even make shift to keep their craft from foundering in a sea whipped to fury in storms of "Establishment" autocracy and interference. But the waves of the "Great Awakening" threatened to break the ship in two in the middle. As a matter of fact, in the concomitant excesses of that movement, individual churches came apart at the seams.

If this be thought an unfair characterization of the epoch of evangelism begun in the many visits of Whitfield to the Colonies, and forwarded by Jonathan Edwards in New England, let it be recalled that it had its lunatic fringe. A complacent formalism and an "austerity of the elect" had invaded American Puritanism and a shaking of the dry bones was overdue when the great English evangelist appeared, not merely to galvanize them into juxtaposition but to clothe them with flesh and breathe into the body a spirit from the Lord. Large benefits followed, but also the evils of dissension and strife. Not all the disciples of Whitfield and Edwards possessed either their mentality or their balance. Self-constituted evangelists went here and there, troubling the waters, and settled ministers, such as the Rev. James Davenport, at Southold, were immoderately exhilarated in the new and rare ozone.

In his salad days Davenport had been strongly influenced by an intimate companion named Ferris, of the Class of 1732 at Yale, who "professed to know the will of God in all things—that he had not committed a sin in six years, that he should have a higher seat in heaven than Moses, and that not one in ten of the communicants in the church (New Haven) could be saved". Ordained and settled in



Southold, in 1738, Davenport shortly became convinced "that God had revealed to him that His kingdom was coming with great power and that he had an extraordinary call to labor for its advancement". In consequence of his subsequent behavior in his own parish and later in Connecticut, as it was vividly described in Miller's *Life of Edwards*, a conflagration swept through the churches.

The astonishingly uninhibited Davenport must have been in his day even more of a sensation than the redoubtable William Sunday at a later. "He raised his voice to the highest pitch in public services, and accompanied his unnatural vehemence and cantatory bawling with the most violent agitations of body. \* \* \* In his harangues he would inform the people that their ministers were unconverted, and tell them that they had as good eat ratsbane as hear an unconverted minister. \* \* \* Congregations were exhorted to eject their ministers; and dissatisfied minorities were encouraged to break off and form new churches; and in this a number of congregations were greatly weakened and others partly destroyed" (Prime, quoting Miller).

"In so grave an emergency the Long Island ministers met to consult what they should do, \* \* \* being convened at Southampton, April the 8th, 1747, \* \* \* having taken into consideration the broken state of the church within said county (Suffolk), the prevalency of separations and divisions, together with the growing mischiefs these disorders are big with". They "came to the following conclusion, viz: that the disorders spoken of were owing to the want of stated rules of ecclesiastical government, and that the Presbyterian system, in its essential articles, was scriptural and best adapted to answer the ends desired. The ministers present did therefore proceed to organize themselves into a Presbytery, to be called the Presbytery of Suffolk, and adopted the Westminster Confession, Catechisms, Form of Government, Directory and Discipline" (Davidson).

Actually, this Presbytery was organized June 14, 1748. The First Church of Huntington, under the steadying influence of a great man, Ebenezer Prime, 62 years its minister, had managed to weather the gale in fair shape, but in the bitter experience had discovered the disadvantages of its comparative isolation. Not theretofore a member of any Presbytery, either that of Philadelphia or Long Island, the Huntington church was represented at the 1747 meeting and joined Suffolk Presbytery in 1748. "The congregation of Bridgehampton had been rent by a two-fold discord. Their contentions and bickerings were a scandal to the cause of Christ. In this emergency a committee of the church requested the interference [Sic!] of the Presbytery" (Davidson). The Presbytery readily composed the differences and the hearts of the people overflowed in gratitude to God for "bringing them out of their late terrible confusions, into such surprising harmony and peace". "In 1749, similar difficulties were adjusted in the congregations of Aquebogue, Southold, and Easthampton".

Happy had it been if all divisive sequelae of the "Great Awakening" or "New Light" movement had been as promptly resolved. Despite the lauded cohesiveness of Presbyterianism, Presbyteries and

Synods were split wide open and so remained, in an "Old Side-New Side" division, until the Reunion of 1758, and just at the time when the church should have been able to muster all its strength for missionary expansion. But the system that developed the Presbytery as final arbiter in all matters of doctrine, discipline and polity survived the test and closed up the gaps in the ranks.

Another and a more fiery trial awaited the variously harassed congregations of Long Island—whether of the Dutch Reformed, Quaker, Church of England or Presbyterian persuasion. Samples of the milder sorts of annoyance the "Establishments" authorities were capable of inventing for Presbyterians had been endured, not always passively. In Jamaica—it is a story in itself—the Church of England had been outrageously obnoxious, not without incurring ingenious reprisals. But nothing it encountered in such brushes compared with the ferocity to which its Tory members were exposed when compelled to flee for their lives to any safety-promising corner of the map or hide by hundreds in the Massapequa swamps (Roberts). Probably the ecclesiastical history of the eight years of the Revolution on Long Island is not yet definitively written. Nor can it be, without a thorough examination of a ton or more of correspondence between the Church of England ministers and leading laymen in this area and the London Society—S.P.G.—to which they were responsible, part of an enormous cache of such documents still reposing in vaults somewhere along the Thames Embankment. Doubtless it has already been drawn upon, but details of interest remain to be filled in. Locally, and naturally, we have heard more of the Presbyterian than of the Episcopalian side. There are two sides to every story of this kind.

However this may be, the British on Long Island favored the "Established" churches and their property as much as possible, and marked the churches of "Dissenters" for such "desecration" as hostilities and convenience suggested. They encamped in "Churchyards", using gravestones to line bake-ovens, billeted their troops or stabled their horses in meeting-houses while they ravaged the countryside and, when occasion appeared to necessitate, demolished beautiful old church buildings. At Huntington they razed "Old First" to make of its timbers fortifications on the church burying ground, which they named Fort Golgotha. They tore down the church at Babylon and carted the timbers to Hempstead to serve military purposes in that region. They vented accumulated resentment upon prominent ministers, mutilating the library of Ebenezer Prime, one of the better collections of the period.

Through all this and more the congregations carried on, holding worship in homes. The faithful in Huntington did not miss a Sunday. With the exception of Bridgehampton, which suffered seriously, churches at the east end of the Island were less gravely discommoded. In the western sections there was intermittent turmoil. Some ministers, Burnet, of Jamaica, for example, maintained a strict neutrality. "History has left no record, nor is there any tradition, of his having written or spoken anything in favor of or against either side in the



struggle that resulted in the independence of the American colonies" (Winans).

Other ministers, Bradner and Spencer, for example, sometime pastors at Jamaica, and Ebenezer Prime, actively espoused the Whig cause. Benoni Bradner—appropriate alliteration—"served as a private in the Continental army". Elihu Spencer became a chaplain. At the end of the war all who survived its hardships and remained here were ushered by that turn of events into a surcease of suffering long endured. Many had gone to Nova Scotia or back to England never to return. Among those who stayed there was bitterness and a hurt that only time could heal. But there was no longer an Establishment in the colonies and the chief cause of friction was removed. The right to self-determination had won. The Presbyterians, and all the rest, were free to follow their genius wherever it might lead. Separation of church and state would soon have constitutional adoption.

How early this principle of separation was acted upon is not by all appreciated. There are examples of its operation during the half-century pastorate of Eliphalet Jones (1675-1725). Mr. Jones had been invited by the town authorities to be the minister of the First Church of Huntington and "it was voted to give him twenty acres of land where he chose to select it". He preached for a year, but not to his own satisfaction that he had been properly "called". Not until his congregation—the militia, assembled on the Common!—voted for him would Jones consider that he had had a real "call". They so voted, with but one dissenting voice. He accepted. But he had again to apply the principle of separation of church and town.

Four years of controversy followed a town meeting held May 1, 1711, when there was a "clear vote" to build a new church. It "should stand in the hollow in the same place where the old meeting-house now standeth". Forty signers had pledged 140 pounds toward the cost of building and the frame had been raised when a division of opinion between east and west parts of the town, on the location, halted construction. Mr. Jones's "reputation for peace and patience was gained by the way he handled the problem". Due to his endeavors it came about that by the voted "consent" of those who would use the new building, not by the action of the original town meeting, the location was decided. This distinction is subtle, but it marks the trend.

"A meeting was called, at the house of Justice John Wood, to have a discussion as to whether the new church should be erected on the old site, on Meeting-House Brook, or on East Hill, a short distance eastward. Being unable to come to an agreement, it was decided to select three ministers; those desiring the church to be put on the old site to choose one, those desiring it to be put on East Hill to choose another, and these two to select a third, 'so that we may be united among us and that we may live together like Christians as we ought to do'. \* \* \* So Reverends Magnis, of Jamaica, Pomarary, of Newtown, and Woolsey, of Oyster

Bay, were chosen to listen to the arguments, for and against the two locations, given by ten men, representing the Meeting-House Brook site, and ten men, representing the East Hill site. This resulted in a report presented to the trustees, in part as follows" (Mary Banks Rogers):

"These presents testify that \* \* \* the Inhabitants of the west part have submitted and condescended unto and agree with the Inhabitants of the east part that full liberty be granted to remove the frame of the new meeting-house erected in 'the hollow' so called unto the 'East Hill'. Signed this 14th day of June in the first year of the reign of King George of Great Britain & Ireland" (Huntington Town Records, Vol. II, Pg. 324).

Seven men from both east and west parts placed their signatures.

The "trustees" to whom the foregoing "report" was presented were officers of the town. It was not until April 6, 1784, when the State of New York enacted a law—probably written by State Senator Ezra L'Hommedieu, a member of the Southold church—"whereby religious societies were enabled to elect trustees as bodies corporate for the administration of their temporalities", that a separation of church and town was completely effected (Rev. E. Hoyt Palmer and Miss H. Maud Terry). But in the meantime such informed and far-sighted ministers as Jones, and the practices of Presbyteries, were gradually preparing the churches to evaluate their new freedom.

It will not do to pass from the Colonial period without a glance toward the equipment, usages and customs of the pre-Revolutionary churches, and some further estimate of the stature of their ministers.

Most of the first church buildings were small, some even temporary and unfinished. Such was that built by Southampton in 1644. Southold's first house of worship was probably made of logs, but it stood from 1641 to 1684. In 1653, Easthampton erected a thatched church 20 by 26 feet in floor area. When slightly bigger and much better structures were built a perfectly square ground-plan was sometimes favored. Brookhaven's, built in 1671, was 28 feet square. Its second, considerably larger, was erected in 1710 and stood for a century, almost to a year. The "Old Stone Church" at Jamaica, 1699-1813, was 26 by 26. These square churches were of the Hingham, Mass., "meeting-house" type. They were called so "not because the people went to church to meet each other, but to meet God". Huntington's first — 1665 — beside "Meeting-House Brook", was "capable to receive and accommodate 200 people". Easthampton's thatched church stood in use 65 years, when it was replaced by "the largest and most splendidly built of the kind on Long Island", with galleries, clock and bell. A comparable and larger church was erected in Huntington in 1715, a date with which we are now familiar. Not to be outdone—perish the thought—it, too, had a bell, a great bell cast in England.

Smaller or larger, these buildings were jam-packed. Drummers paid by the towns summoned to meeting the folk within earshot. But churches were far apart and few between and the people came



from great distances, and Southold solved the problem of communication with a large wrought-iron triangle struck with a sledge hammer and heard for miles. To the Huntington church the folk came from Huntington-South, later Babylon. Until 1729, it was the only church in some 150 square miles and almost everybody attended. Attendance on such a scale was maintained until long after the Revolution, but with the coming of other denominations Nathaniel Prime lamented, in 1844, the good old days when churches were filled.

In some places it was the custom to "seat" the church, the men on one side, the women on the other. Men who paid, say, two pounds in taxes had seats nearest the pulpit. Behind them sat those who paid less, in their order. Behind these sat the sons of those who paid more, then the sons of those who paid less. On the other side and nearest the pulpit the wives of those who paid most were placed, then the wives of those who paid less, then the daughters in similar order (Kate Strong, H. D. Eberlein). The custom that separated male and female persisted at great length in one form or another.

There was no heat in churches, except from foot-stoves for the women, the only concession to human frailty. There was no need for lights. Churches were used only for morning and early afternoon services. The order of worship was of the simplest; an expository reading of the Bible, very instructive and never omitted, a long pastoral prayer, hymns keyed to a pitch-pipe, and a sermon sometimes continuing for an hour or more. Much the same order was followed at the second service. For noon intermission the people were gathered on the green or in the church yard, conning epitaphs, or clustered around horse blocks or hitching posts in restrained gossip about crops and the neighbors. Then back to the benches or—later—box pews.

Between 1640 and 1747, thirty-three ministers had been settled in the Presbyterian churches. Seven of them had degrees from Yale, three from Harvard, two from Cambridge University and one from the University of Glasgow. Thus 42.9% of all ministers had received the best education possible. The rest had had sufficient theological training to pass the customary thoroughgoing examinations for ordination. In the next fifty years graduates of Harvard, Dartmouth, Yale and Nassau (Princeton) came in greater numbers. The Presbyterians believed in an educated ministry.

Outstanding ministers of this period were Denton, Prime, Buell and Woolworth—omitting Jones, of whom some account has been given. But high on the roster Thomas James and Nathaniel Huntting must appear, if for no other reason than that each of them served the Easthampton church with distinction for half a century; also the name of Ebenezer White, for 53 years pastor at Bridgehampton; and no list of the exceptional would be complete without the names of Azariah Horton and the extraordinary Sampson (or Samson) Occum, minister to the Montauks.

In Bernice Marshall's *Colonial Hempstead*, Denton is spoken of as "the first figure to detach itself from the shades of the past with its struggle against King and Bishop and to anticipate the unfamiliar antagonists of the future in a wilderness to be conquered

and adapted to human needs and happiness". Cotton Mather wrote: "Among these clouds (of witnesses) was one pious and learned Mr. Richard Denton, a Yorkshire man, who, having watered Halifax in England with his fruitful ministry, was by a tempest hurried to New England, where first at Wethersfield then at Stamford (then at Hempstead) 'his doctrine dropped as the rain \* \* \* as showers upon the grass'." Part of the Latin inscription upon his monument, in Essex, England, is translated thus: "Here lies the dust of Richard Denton. O'er his low peaceful grave bends the perennial cypress, fit emblem of his unfading fame".

Ebenezer Prime, minister in Huntington for sixty-two years (1721-1783), would have been a notable man in any generation. Over his own, or so much of it as dwelt here, he towered, a man of great strength of character, unusual intellectual ability and conspicuous fidelity. He began as the associate of Mr. Jones, the second minister, and served with him two years. Continuing then alone he had 42 members, 15 men and 27 women. He added 216, about the usual small portion of the whole population, but he baptized about 2550 infants and married about 850 couples. Hence his records, published by Moses Scudder in 1898, are of almost unparalleled value to genealogists, containing as they do the baptism and marriage dates for practically every family in Huntington during his time.

Prime's diary, now in the Gardiner wing of the Easthampton Library, is a disclosure of the otherwise secret prayer-life of a devout but often stormswept spirit. Mostly the diary recounts his experiences in preparing for administering the Lord's Supper. It was a soul-searching time with him. He laments the "horrible temptations" that assail him, periods of testing "lasting a fortnight". He hopes for times of "enlargement" at the Communion Service but repeatedly reports only "deadness and coldness", evidently his own, rather than that of his people. This introspection characterizes his entries for at least fifty years, relieved but rarely by brief seasons of "refreshing". Ferris "had not committed a sin in six years". Prime, of the diary, was full of sin, a miserable, wretched body of sores, crying out over his blotted pages. Ferris flew off on tangents. Davenport sowed the seed of dissension. Prime found an outlet at the point of his goose-quill pen and kept his congregation together, tenderly shepherding his people, come earthquake, Redcoat or half-baked evangelist. Excepting an occasional "event in the family" earthquakes appear to be about the only sublunary phenomena he was moved to make note of in his personal reflections. They impressed him, no doubt, as marks of divine disapprobation. That was the traditional interpretation.

Perhaps the perpetual solemnity of Prime was partly temperamental. He had neither the wit nor the exuberance of Buell. Buell, an avowed Whig, was nevertheless a favorite of Sir William Erskine, commander of British forces at Easthampton, and thus in a position to mitigate the severities usually inflicted upon rebellious communities, and he could banter his way out of a dangerous encounter with Lord Percy. But Prime lacked such savoir-faire and suffered with his congregation. On account of this they thought no less of him.



The Rev. Samuel Buell, D.D. (Princeton), third pastor at Easthampton (that church had but three ministers in a century and a half, each serving about 50 years) was a "gifted" man. His preaching appealed. In a day when most were confined to manuscript he spoke often without notes and had in general the skills of the unique orator. He was vigorous to the end. At eighty he was keeping preaching engagements after hours in the saddle and at the age of 82 he ministered in his own pulpit the day before he died. Moreover, he walked in the way of John Knox, marrying a youthful wife in advanced age, and the marriage was blessed by the birth of a daughter. Commenting upon this incident the historian Prime remarked: "He had his weaknesses; but who has not?"

Charlestown, S. C., is not alone in supplying examples of lengthily worded epitaphs. The tablestone over the grave of Aaron Woolworth, D.D. (Princeton, 1809), at Bridgehampton was inscribed with 218 words. N. S. Prime says he deserved every one of them, and that "he was one of the most able, discriminating and pious divines that Long Island was ever blessed with". He was Bridgehampton's third pastor. In 1844, that church had had but four.

Work among the Indians had been begun by Thomas James, the first minister at Easthampton, and by the Southampton church, but nothing achieved compares with the success of Azariah Horton, a native of Southold, appointed a missionary to the Indians by the New York Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1747. Though much of his time was spent with the Shinnecocks he made a 100-mile stretch, from Shinnecock Hills to Far Rockaway, his parish for eleven years. He lived with the natives in their wigwams, taught them faithfully with the assistance of an interpreter, at a snail-like pace compared with which the leisurely progress in the United Nations Council is as the speed of a greyhound, and actually managed to reach with a real understanding of the gospel a people who for 100 years had resisted foreign doctrine of every sort. Lives were actually changed. Savage though he was, the Indian was capable of appreciating a better way. And more, he could stand before white men and edify them!

"In the library at Dartmouth College hangs a portrait of a dark, longmaned Colonial preacher, bearing the legend 'Samson Occum—The Indian Mohegan'" (John C. Huden). If the reader, who has not seen the portrait, can imagine a short, stocky figure, with full firm face, square head and oval chin, wide eyes and the slender hands and tapering fingers of a gentleman, and dressed in black brocade and knee-breeches, all topped by broad white clerical bands, he will have some notion of the appearance of a Connecticut aborigine who could "walk with kings, nor lose the common touch". Possibly the painter conventionalized his subject, particularly about the hands, but Occum was one of nature's noblemen, or the gospel's, and needed little idealization. If he did not walk with kings he stood before them, and not merely as a curiosity, as the first Indian ever seen in England, but in some honor, as the representative of Moor's Charity School, for the extension of which he was sent to England to raise funds. The "common touch" brought \$40,000 back to America, but

to Occum's disappointment it was primarily useful in the founding of Dartmouth, he thinking it should have been used to enlarge Moor's, the school he had attended.

Dr. Timothy Dwight, famous President of Yale, possibly with the slight lift of the eyebrow he sometimes employed, as we shall see,



(Photo Courtesy of The Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress)

*First Presbyterian Church, Huntington*

when he alluded to Long Island inhabitants, stated that he had heard Occum twice. "His discourses, though not proofs of superior talents, were decent, and his utterances in some degree eloquent." Nevertheless, Occum wrote verse and at least one hymn, "Awaked by Sinai's Awful Sound", that was in use in church hymnals as late as the close of the 19th century, probably after some alterations.

The Revolution being ended the congregations began at once to build churches to replace those demolished. Both Babylon and Huntington erected new buildings in 1784. Formerly, but for rare exceptions, a tax on the town had paid for such construction. In the new



order the money was to be raised by subscription. The churches were free and, so it proved, self-sustaining. Despite the impoverishment by war the funds were made immediately available. Some of the subscription lists, with names and amounts, are preserved. With one possible exception, all the oldest Presbyterian church buildings now standing were erected after the Revolution. All were larger and new sorts of furnishings came into use, but no novel architectural method had come into vogue, such as would turn churches into amphitheaters. Most of the buildings of the period would be specimens of good design that barring fire would stand for centuries.

They would be built as before by native carpenters, the "boss carpenters" probably drawing the plans, some of them following New England types that had begun to show the Christopher Wren influence, others on lines that may have been indigenous to Long Island. For the best carpenters of Long Island were shipbuilders and their work on churches bore the marks of their trade. The great sills, a foot square or more, rested on low stone walls extending downward a short distance into the sand, or into soil when the location afforded it. No cellar would be dug under a church until furnaces came into use, in the middle of the 19th century. The weight of huge timbers bearing on the sills would steady the craft in any hurricane. The braced frame would be as that of a tall ship, all weatherboard and drawing hardly so much as a foot, resting on sand instead of water. To the ship carpenters the studding would be like so many ribs. Also, for example, the "barrel-ceiling" of the Old First Church in Huntington (1784) actually resembles an inverted hull, with single-jointed ribs, the joints forming the lines of a couple of imaginary bilge keels. The oak timbers of this church were hauled from Lloyd's Neck, seasoned long, finished with the adze, mortised and tenoned with chisels and mallets and fastened with oak pins. The under-gallery knee braces suggest hackmatack deck supports, but on a slightly acute angle.

Even more impressive is the restraint—the simplicity, delicacy and grace—in the details of both the exterior and interior finishing of this church. Nothing is adventitious or overdone. The column casings are octagonal and plain, the capitals and cornice conservatively moulded. So too are the gallery panels. Incidentally, the inside of the gallery rail is quaintly disfigured by the carvings of many, resolved to "hand down their names to posterity on an ash chip". At the rear of the "barrel" are three semi-circular openings to what were originally slave galleries, now closed with wide boarding. At first there were two long north-end windows, later removed and replaced by paneling. The original pulpit may have been gallery high, but from many of the box pews the preacher would have been invisible. Possibly when the box pews gave place to long straight pews the pulpit was lowered. At some early day whale-oil lamps were introduced and were probably supported by long, exquisitely wrought iron brackets from which electrically lighted lanterns are now suspended. Later a central chandelier held 24 kerosene lamps. When the chandelier was removed and concealed lighting installed the workmen attempted to cut through the iron rings from which

the chandelier hung. No saw would do it. Of course a blowtorch could not be used. So the rings in the barrel ceiling remain. Hundreds of the original bubble-glass panes still admit a pleasantly distorted daylight.

This is one of the oldest Presbyterian buildings on Long Island, although others have claimed a greater antiquity. The first building at Middle Island was erected in 1766, but it was "rebuilt" in 1837, with how extensive changes the writer does not know. The building at South Haven is admittedly old and is said to be the most ancient of all (Eells). If the present building is the original, it was built in 1728. Old First, in Huntington, has suffered no changes in structure, being in that respect always the same for 162 years.

The only Long Island church building included in Embury's *Early American Churches* is that at Sag Harbor, built in 1844. It is there discussed as something quite unique. The facade and 135-foot spire—the 1938 hurricane tore off the spire—were designed to display a combination of Greek and Egyptian decor most unusual. The interior is equally elaborate with Corinthian capitals and fluted columns, all beautifully kept a gleaming white. A vast amount of labor went into it, which the third most important whaling port in the world could well afford, with a heart to put of its best into the House of God.

The Smithtown church, built in 1827, is a gem. Rather of the New England type, set well back on a locust-studded lawn and flanked by ancient horsesheds, it is as vivid a reminder of a past dignity and beauty as can be found anywhere. Interiorly, straight pews have replaced a central block of box pews, but the box pews under the galleries have been kept. The pulpit is at the entrance end and the worshippers pass the pulpit on the way to their pews.

The present Southold church, originally 40 by 60, to hold 400, was built in 1803. The frame raising required three days. Its lines and proportions resemble those of the Setauket church, a type often preferred by Long Island builders, but it has its own definite individuality, like every other of the early buildings. The congregation preserves as highly valued relics a cello, the first instrument to follow the pitchpipe, the wrought-iron triangle—that preceded the bell and superseded the drum, for calling worshippers—a tile from the floor of St. Edmund's, in Southwold, England, and communion cups fashioned by Simeon Soumaine, early American silversmith, and in use until recently.

The fine old building at Setauket was erected in 1811-1812. Kate Strong, in her well documented and extremely interesting *Tale of an Old Church* (*The Long Island Forum*), traces parts of the former building into the homes of members of the congregation, representatives of a people who wasted nothing—the pulpit stairs to the house of Isaac Brewster, the pulpit rail to the house of Clark Tucker, one of the two builders.

When the growth of congregations made necessary the construction of new and much larger houses of worship there was probably some regret over parting with the former buildings that had been focal points of dear associations. Often several generations of a



family had occupied the same pew. But such changes were endured without protest. Not, however, the introduction of innovations. These were the cause of great debate. By way of exception, the gradual transition from simple to complicated musical instruments appears to have been effected with little or no disturbance. The related questions of propriety had probably been settled by churches in New England before organs were introduced here. In 1867, Huntington installed an organ by Erben, a well-known New York organ builder; Smithtown likewise, and it is still in use. Huntington, when replacing its Erben with a Casavant, even achieved a mollifying sense of humor. One of the successful advocates of the inclusion of a "harp" made his appeal on the ground that "some of the congregation are dubious of hearing any harps in the next world".

The post-Revolution period was marked not only by the growth of churches but also by a new impetus given to education. From the beginning the schools had been continuously in the control of church-town government. The church had considered the schools its "nurseries". The Bible was the book from which reading was taught. The carefully chosen men teachers began and concluded school sessions with Bible reading and prayer. Later the Westminster catechism, or some other, was a regular feature of recitations. Even after the Revolution the religious influence remained and the new departures toward "higher" education were initiated in several cases under the leadership of the ministers. Due largely to the efforts of Buell, Clinton Academy, the first institution of that kind to be chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, was erected in Easthampton the very year the Revolution ended. Mr. Fautoute, pastor at Jamaica, was a member of the committee that raised, in 1792, the funds to erect Union Hall Academy, the sixth to be chartered by the Regency, and he became its principal in 1796.

Thus, insular though the inhabitants are reputed to have been, they had achieved in the latter part of the 18th century an actual priority in respect to establishing secondary schools in the state of New York, all while operating under a theory of the responsibility of organized religion to inform and shape the whole life of the community. This concept proved practical. In 1804, Timothy Dwight made a tour of Long Island. From his famous report of his trip we take the following comments: "The inhabitants \* \* \* are destitute of other advantages which contribute not a little to diffuse information and awaken energy. \* \* \* Comparatively few persons of talents and information reside here. \* \* \* A considerable number of such men born here \* \* \* are found in New York and elsewhere. The advantages derived from their conservation and example—persons distinguished for superiority of character—are therefore enjoyed in a very imperfect degree." Then another lift of the eyebrow, and a prophecy: "Such it would seem must, through an indefinite period, be the situation of Long Island." It was in 1834 that a Federal Census found here, in Suffolk County, only 2 persons per 1000 who could not read or write, thus giving this county the highest rating in the United States. It will be recalled that

about that time there could be found in Yale only one student who would acknowledge that he was a Christian.

Insularity may even be thought to have been an advantage. The asperities of institutions coming to be regarded as evil were much modified by the local spiritual climate. Feudalism, as represented by the Lords of Manor, was vastly different from its prototype in England. As a rule tenants were well treated. Slaves were frequently manumitted, and at any time could effect a transfer of masters upon application to their owners, possibly in some cases because it was believed that the owner of a dissatisfied slave would find his restless servant less profitable than another might prove to be. The names of baptized children of slaves were often entered in family records beside those of the baptized white children of the household. In consequence, when by enactment in 1817, becoming fully effective in 1827, New York state freed all slaves within its borders the adjustment to the new status was an easy matter. True, some of the slaves married Indians, but others and their descendants became self-supporting units of the white man's social order, and members of white men's churches and so remain to this day, and they do not sit in slave galleries, but with the congregation on the main floor.

On this supposedly insular terrane the churches were in contact with every form of social structure ever known to man except the matriarchate and the totalitarian state—tribal life of aborigines, feudalism, the purest democracy that ever existed anywhere, a theocracy never seen anywhere else but under Moses in the wilderness and under Calvin at Geneva, communism in a "Fourier" colony, "Shakerism" and the beginnings of modern industrialism; and the churches absorbed all of some of them and parts of all of them. Not only so; the Island was no more exposed to ocean breezes than were the churches to every wind of doctrine, from orthodoxy to Hicksite "unorthodoxy", from complacent post-millennialism to the extreme crochets of pre-millennialism.

After 150 years of rigid Puritanism an "Infidel Club" was organized in Easthampton, of all places, and there spread its beliefs that the Bible was largely "a fable". Because some of the leaders were active in local affairs their propaganda turned the town upside down, but in a matter of thirty years not a vestige of this aberration could be found there. Hardly would infidelism be out of the running before one Gannage would have Patchogue by the ears with the Millerite prediction that the world would come to an end April 23, 1844. Stores closed out, properties were sold, people put their affairs in order and fabricated ascension robes. But the Lord didn't come. Only those Congregationalists affected were disappointed. The Presbyterians, if they refrained from gloating, nevertheless commented that when the delusion had been branded by divine providence as a lie the honesty of those who failed to admit their error was seriously in question. But soon the Presbyterians would be divided by a schism involving every Presbytery in the United States, the result of the Old School-New School theological controversy.

This upheaval was largely the issue of differences between New England English Presbyterians and Middle States Scottish Presby-



terians, arising from the latter's suspicion of New England deviations from the strict standards of Calvinism, as represented in the Confession and Catechisms, becoming at length a fight to control the



(From watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis)

*Christ's First Presbyterian Church, Hempstead*

Church. Without delving into all this, suffice it to say that at its climax the schism split the Presbyteries of Long Island. Then in two Old School Presbyteries there were 22 ministers, 23 churches and 4105 communicants; in two New School Presbyteries 16 ministers, 10 churches and 2179 communicants (Prime). In the whole country "the Old School defended pure Presbyterianism by cutting off 533



churches and a hundred thousand communicants" (R. F. Weld), the forcing out of the New School churches, and the forming of New School Presbyteries, perpetuating the struggle for power until the "Reunion" in 1869. In one of his charming religious essays Boreham, a famed Australian preacher, remarks that "the trouble with most controversies is that both sides are wrong", meaning probably that often the very essence of the commonweal is compromise, and that when controversialists leave off their contention, to find on higher ground than that of acrimonious debate a synthesis of their differences, it is there for the seeking. Presbyterianism, as we shall see, was learning slowly and by bitter experience how to make room for much divergence of theological opinion, within a constitution broad enough to permit considerable freedom of religious thinking and a degree of encouragement to an intellectual honesty at variance with more conservative interpretations.

In the Old School-New School melee it was a sometime Long Island Presbyterian minister who became one of the principal storm centers. That was at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, where its Old School Trustees were engaged in ouster proceedings against their President, newly called from Boston and shortly suspected of the New England theological taint. This was the already legendary Lyman Beecher, a big ecclesiastical potato shaken to the top over a road that led through Easthampton, Long Island, and Litchfield, Connecticut. Even at Easthampton he had manifested as a youth characteristics that would keep him always in the spotlight. A gusty personality, whether leading a revival or hunting rabbits or, as Forrest Wilson (*Crusader in Crinoline*, a Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe) has it, raging at his migratory pigs, Lyman Beecher moved in an aura of excitement. Easthampton paid a meagre salary and he lived beyond it. His remarkable wife, Roxana Foote, eked out with teaching in her own private school for girls not enough for a competence. The congregation liquidated his debts but declined to raise his salary, and he accepted a call to Litchfield where his great and good friend, Judge Tapping Reeve, a native Long Islander and one of the ablest jurists of the time, would counsel and encourage him. Lyman Beecher's was "the best theological brain in America" and his masterful logic is possibly to be credited with forefending Easthamptonites against the curiously egregious "free-thinking" which would follow the departure of their most famous minister and find itself doomed to failure.

When Beecher was beginning to win wide attention, Rev. Joshua Hartt, hardly a national figure, though famed as a patriot preacher imprisoned by the British, and endeared to innumerable people of the Island, was approaching the close of his more modest career. During the Revolution Hartt, born in Huntington in 1738 and graduated from Princeton in 1770, was the minister at Smithtown. After the war he lived at Fort Salonga and, though never again settled as a pastor, became an uninstalled minister to the whole adjacent countryside, where countless "intending" couples doubted they would be "properly married unless 'Priest Hartt', as he was generally known, had officiated". "A huge, kindly man", he miraculously survived an



almost fatal attack of "prison fever" in the Provost Jail in New York. His cellmate was Ethan Allen, hero of Fort Ticonderoga. Freed before Ethan, Hartt went home and, as Simon Cooper, long-time Long Island Editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, observes, forever disposed of the canard that Ethan Allen was an unbeliever, quoting him as saying: "Mr. Hartt, you are soon to be given your freedom. When you are once more with your family, tell them that you were sick and in prison and nigh unto death, and that Ethan Allen, a servant of the Most High God, prayed over you and you recovered". He certainly recovered, lived to the age of 91 and died at Freshpond in 1829.

Incredible as it may seem, to those who now can think of Long Island only as the outlet, market-garden and playground of the greatest metropolis on earth, and of Brooklyn as "an intervening hell of jerry-built houses and unmarked streets", until well into the 18th century the eastern part of Long Island was, as Prime says, no mere "fag end" but the most consequential part of the Province of New York. Brooklyn was but a village and New York was scarcely more. But there were five great manors in what is now Suffolk County, four more on nearby islands. These manors were first-rank social centers in the New World. It has been said that no European of note, coming to this part of America in that period, failed to visit the Sylvesters on Shelter Island. Between the manors and the Old World there was constant though irregular communication. Daughters of the Manor married prominent ministers and freeholders of the Island. Whaling ships brought cargoes from innumerable ports to Cold Spring and Sag Harbor. Ships were always a-building. Proprietors like Ichabod Brush were making fortunes in South America, banking in London, but coming home to Long Island to live as country gentlemen, with horses, boats and books—yes, books! This Ichabod had collected and housed at the head of Huntington Harbor a library that would have looked well in any home in New Haven; excepting perhaps for such tomes, of the "boots and spurs" type, as were more lively than pious. His will was probated in 1809, disposing of an estate of upwards of \$80,000, a considerable sum for those days, for a "commoner". The Island of that day was no hinterland. But its relegation to comparative insignificance was not far distant in time.

Steam and the industrial revolution would be the agents to effect this change. By 1844, Greenport, Riverhead and Jamaica would be way-stations on a rail-and-water route connecting Boston and New York. Enterprising citizens would be moving to Brooklyn and New York to avail themselves of expected gains. Whitman would soon tire of his *Long-Islander* and be off to the East River waterfront and the enchantments of a new kind of workaway world. The "Forty-Niners" by the hundreds would be on their precarious way to California. More germane to the theme, the Storrs would be leaving Southold, one of their sons to become a peer of peers in leadership of the religious life of a previously sprawling collection of villages shortly to be known as the "City of Churches". There in less than half a century the Presbyterian churches would multiply in number unequaled except in such centers as Philadelphia, New York and

Chicago. And there, too, in no long time, the strongest churches on the Island would be found, much larger in membership and of greater wealth than any eastward of Kings County.

One of these churches, being more than a century old and reflecting more than most the social and theological changes of the age, at the same time taking a leading role, must receive proportionate attention in this necessarily condensed account. It is the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, founded in 1822. Its distinctive service is fittingly memorialized in the pages of *A Tower On The Heights*, written with skill and understanding by Ralph Foster Weld and published by Columbia University Press in 1946. Upon its representations the author of this chapter must lean, as he has upon Prime, Winans and sundry.

The succession of ministers—Hall, Clarke, Morgan Noyes and Phillips Elliott—that formed and maintained in the First Church a tradition of liberalism, began with the pastorate of Samuel Hanson Cox who, after two years as professor of rhetoric and pastoral theology in Auburn Seminary, came to Brooklyn in 1837, at the age of thirty-five. He took charge at a time when the Old School-New School controversy had been mounting, through the thirties, to its peak of effectiveness in dividing churches, presbyteries and synods. Cox was no extremist. He would have welcomed compromises, being of an ironic disposition and “a little to the left of center”. But compromises were impossible. Much as he would have liked to invoke the aegis of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church to settle difficulties by the inclusion of contenders of both sides, pleas of such a sort were bound to fall on deaf ears, and did. There was nothing for it but to join the lists, lower his lance and charge. He was a mighty man of valor, yet did not scorn to handle his weapon adroitly. When a minister “packs the court” (Weld), procuring the election of four New School Elders to his Session, and when, after the majority of the Session and congregation have gone over to the New School, two Old School Elders appeal to an Old School presbytery, to retain for themselves and their constituency the name of First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, and are sustained in their appeal, news of the “man bites dog” significance is about to be spread over every front page in America. It was sufficiently spread. Then the Old School First Church found in another building a place of worship, but the rallying of the people was to the New School First Church that had the ablest and most brilliant preacher in the city, then of some 25,000. Thus this church, in a decade and a half after its founding, moved into the company of those liberals who were beginning to suspect that “the love of God is broader than the measure of man’s mind”.

Nobody now debates whether salvation is for “the elect only”, or whether the grace of God abounds for all. It isn’t even an academic question. But in those days the latter assumption was heterodoxy. Now it is orthodoxy. “Time makes ancient good uncouth”, but often not until a proposed change of emphasis has separated the ecclesiastical world into two belligerent camps and provoked a conflict that might have been avoided if the foresight of men had been as good as their hindsight.



To a great degree the history of the First Church epitomizes the outstanding events of a century of theological transition. Not that others were unaffected, but that most of the ministers of the First Church were on the side of progressive ideas and liberal interpretations and they could not as a rule keep silence when the whole church was writhing in growing pains, or fail to take their congregations with them in attempts to understand such situations. "Gay Nineties" was not a term to describe that decade in respect to the state of the church. It was a time of theological upheaval such as was never known in America before, nor since.

In those rather Sad Nineties it was a heresy trial that shook the continent. A conservative scholar, Charles Augustus Briggs, of Union Theological Seminary, interpreting the Presbyterian "standards" which were formulated by the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649), had stated that that convocation had not bound the church to a doctrine of absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures—had not intended to. Rather, had intended not to. This statement of fact aroused defenders of the Bible to feverish attack. His Presbytery acquitted Briggs of heresy but the General Assembly reversed the Presbytery and Briggs went over to the Episcopal Church, where apparently there was then more respect for scholarship.

In the excitement that accompanied the Briggs trial the next minister on the list of liberals that served the First Church of Brooklyn took no part. He was the properly famed Charles Cuthbert Hall. A peaceable man, devoted to a constructive program for building up his church, faithfully ministering to the people and greatly endearing himself to them, he did not enter the "hustings" of debate on Biblical interpretation.

Dr. Hall's successor, Dr. L. Mason Clarke, whose pastorate was the longest in the First Church's history, though approaching the end of his active ministry, was still continuing in power and effectiveness when controversy, threatening to be as divisive as that of the 1830s, swept the country in the portentous days that followed World War I, Dr. Clarke's position was well known, but he could not be indifferent in the face of a recrudescence of obscurantism. He charged the "Fundamentalists", and a "Fundamentalist" Assembly, with being "afraid of the light", with "intolerance in its pathetic audacity in attempting to compel submission to its defiance of the scientific method, \* \* \* with being false to the spirit of the revelation, through trying to bind upon the church the thought-forms of an age that has gone". In other words, Dr. Clarke did not believe in "a static faith", but in "a continuous and progressive revelation". He reviewed the acts of General Assemblies in America that had broadly construed the constitution of the Presbyterian church and had defended freedom of interpretation, and in answer to an Assembly that had forgotten itself and had insisted that it was necessary for a Presbyterian minister to believe in a certain "five points" of doctrine, he declared with complete candor that he did not believe in one of them. And Dr. Clarke was not put on trial for heresy! Nor was he the first or only one who prior to 1920 had been equally outspoken in defense of constitutional provisions for latitude in belief.

It is not to be supposed that only from strong city churches were voices heard pleading for a more liberal theology and for a cessation of attacks upon good men who differed with their brethren on the rightness of rigid Calvinism. Back in 1900-1903, the Rev. Samuel T. Carter, pastor for thirty-five years of Old First at Huntington had spoken out more than once on the subject. In 1900, the Presbytery of New York, in an Overture to General Assembly, requested that, "in the interest of the peace of the whole church, the Presbytery of New York be supported in declining to try Dr. McGiffert (of Union Theological Seminary) for heresy". Dr. Carter drew up that overture. Also in 1900, this same Nassau Presbytery, Dr. Carter taking the lead, overtured the Assembly for "the adoption of a statement of Presbyterian belief acceptable to those who recognize the validity of modern scholarship in the interpretation of Scripture". Nassau Presbytery was said to be the first to send such an overture. The Assembly adopted, as a result, a *Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith* and published it in the church hymnals where it has been in use ever since. But soon Dr. Carter himself was the subject of reprisals.

Dr. Carter had resigned his pastorate in Huntington that he might not involve his congregation in the conflict which would ensue. However, when the blow came, they stood by him to the last member, while his narrowly averted trial for heresy became a matter of nation-wide interest and elicited many expressions of approval of his forthrightness and courage, and also, no doubt, cries of alarm because he had said: "The Westminster Confession presents for the worship and allegiance of men a God who, according to the good pleasure of His will, assigned millions of the human race to endless torment before they were born or had done any good or ill" and "of this company a large number died in infancy and committed no personal transgression. The Confession, in fact, says that God is a monster. Modern theology says He is not."

The name of Dr. Carter was not dropped from the roll of Presbytery. It was not merely because the members had no heart to remove from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church a greatly loved man who had served the church so long and so effectively. Changes in theological statement were overdue. They knew it. The more radical Dr. Clarke also remained a member of the Presbytery. He was not brought to trial. For by this time another situation had arisen. The Church had been losing possible candidates for the ministry. Able and devoted young men were turning away from a Church which they feared was incurably reactionary. Dr. Clarke's boldness encouraged them. If there were men like Dr. Clarke in Presbyteries there might be some chance of passing an examination for ordination without making mental reservations they thought dishonorable.

The outcome was in a measure an example of giving people what they want, only to find that they do not want it. Young men encouraged to enter seminaries sometimes learned that the old forms had not lost their content. Something indispensable was enshrined therein; but they would blaze toward it their own trails. So they did. They came before Presbyteries with theological statements so



fresh in viewpoint and expression that, while sometimes avoiding the use of the conventional terms, they completely satisfied even the conservatives that they had the root of the matter in them.

In the meantime, as through the centuries, many still found the received forms rich, suggestive and rewarding. In deep feeling there is always much that escapes language, and a symbol is needed to stand for more than one can say or even think. At the corner of Clinton and Remsen Streets, two or three blocks from "A Tower On The Heights", stands a church which has continuously represented the conservative wing. It is "Spencer Memorial", founded October 25, 1831, as the Second Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. Its first pastor, Rev. Ichabod Spencer, D.D., was there installed in 1832. This church has always been a solid bulwark of traditional belief, strong in its evangelical message, an inspiration to large numbers of the faithful. In its position it is undoubtedly representative of a large part of the some 120 Presbyterian churches, 180 ministers and the 40,000 communicants now enrolled in the Island's two Presbyteries, Brooklyn-Nassau and Long Island. Its pastor, Dr. Frank E. Simmons, ably sustains its character. Dr. Henry Van Dyke's father served this church as pastor from 1875 to 1891.

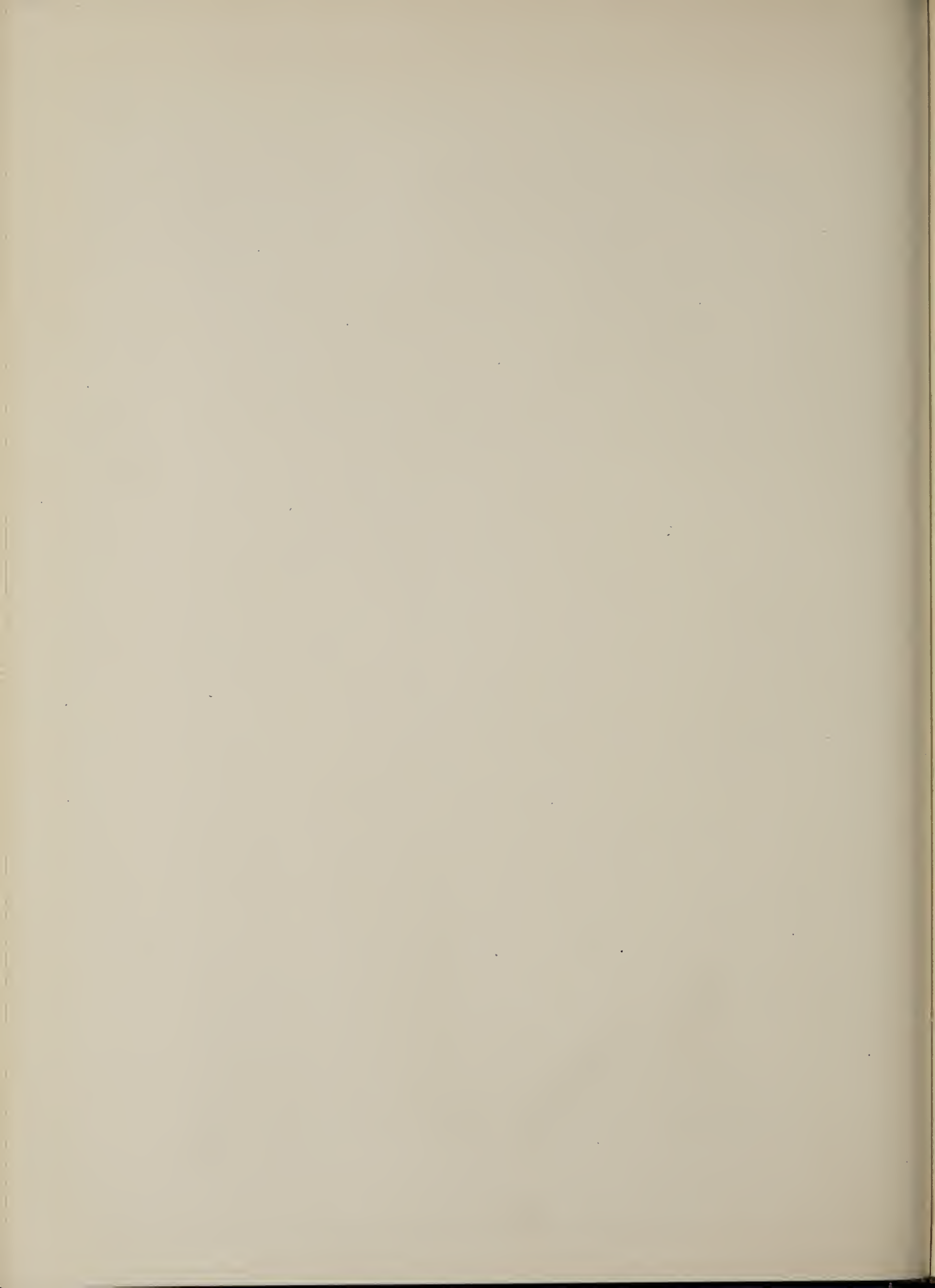
Phoebe Moore Wickham, of Mattituck, appears to have been the founder of the first Sunday School in Suffolk County in 1791, possibly the first in New York State. Mrs. Wickham had come as a bride from Southold to Mattituck. Having read of the success of the work of Robert Raikes in London, she enlisted the sympathy of her husband, Joseph P., and set up in her own "parlor" a school for the children of the church. Sunday Schools multiplied. By 1860, they had formed a Suffolk County Sabbath School Association and were regularly issuing a magazine. As early as 1816, there were Sunday Schools in the west end. It was in connection with the revival of such a school then organized that in 1822 the First Church in Brooklyn was founded. There are now some 18,000 members of Presbyterian Sunday Schools on Long Island.

Not only were there "mothers in Israel", like Phoebe Wickham (she had no children of her own), there were mother churches. Mattituck and Cutchogue were "set off" from Southold. Islip is a child of Babylon. The Babylon and Melville churches, the Central and Bethany churches of Huntington, are children of Huntington's Old First. Brooklyn's First nurtured City Park Mission. Before 1846, the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth churches of Brooklyn were founded. Hempstead is the mother of Presbyterianism at the Golden Gate; for her sometime pastor, Sylvester Woodbridge, resigning his charge, went with the Forty-Niners, not for gold but for the Gospel's sake, and became the first Presbyterian missionary to San Francisco. From the Long Island churches hundreds of ministers, missionaries and teachers have gone, even to the uttermost parts.

What shall we say more? Time will fail to tell of the strong leaders, lay and clerical, and the great families that have filled niches in the growing structure and have left upon it the marks of their distinctive contributions—of Ephraim Whitaker, forty years pastor of Southold, prolific author and saintly character; of Charles Craven

and his Mattituck School; of Dr. Beebe, half a century at Cutchogue; of the Barretts, not of Wimpole Street but Sagg, and the Coyles, of Westhampton Beach; of John D. and Newell Woolsey Wells, for one of whom a church was named; of Andrew Magill, thirty-five years at Jamaica, and of Frank Kerr, now fifty-three years at Hempstead—he is the Dean and Nestor of them all; a beloved pastor, careful historian, honored Presbyter, friend of youth, proponent and exemplar of Christianity—of the Strong's, who for generations, at Strong's Neck on Conscience Bay, have invested their lives in the Setauket church; of the Sands, one of whom served the Islip Sunday School as superintendent for fifty years; of the families Denton, Hedges, Howell, Humphries, Pierpont, Baylis, Sammis, MacDougall, Terry, Ogden and White. These and their ilk are legion, lights in their several stations. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."





## CHAPTER XXII

### *The Episcopal Church on Long Island*

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ALTHOUGH there are few records which lead us to believe that the Church of England had regularly constituted places of worship on Long Island before the end of the seventeenth century, it may be reasonably assumed that if there were English settlers who were not members of the dissenting bodies, at least part of the Services contained in the Book of Common Prayer were regularly held. From time immemorial the English Church people have maintained that, in private and in well-established homes and even on board ships when no regularly ordained clergyman was present, the offices provided in the Prayer Book should be read at least on Sundays by the head of the household or by the captain of a ship, as the case might be.

Most of the early settlers in Suffolk County and in a large portion of Queens, while originally of British citizenship, had because of their religious beliefs disassociated themselves from the Established Church and either had gone to Holland or joined with the dissenting group known as Puritans. Many of these migrated to New England from which they sailed across the Sound to Long Island.

Among these was Lion Gardiner who was Commander of Saybrook Fort, Connecticut, at the time his son, David, the first white child to be born in Connecticut, was born on April 29, 1636. Miss Sarah D. Gardiner, the direct descendant of Lion Gardiner through David, and present owner of Gardiner's Island, informs the writer that her ancestor, David, went to England to complete his education and that while he was there was married in St. Mary's Church, London, on June 4, 1657. Miss Gardiner states that not only is she an Episcopalian, but that there have been many in her family, at least one of whom became a clergyman in the Church.

The sturdy folk on Long Island, like the Plymouth Pilgrims before them, preferred to isolate themselves, suffering the hardships of a wilderness, in order to find an asylum where they might enjoy the freedom of civil and religious liberties. In these early days the name largely applied to their form of worship was "Independent", and their places of worship were the Town Meeting Houses. It is a known fact that the first two Independent Churches to be located on Long Island were organized in New England. The one at Southold, on the northeastern arm of Long Island, was formed at New Haven and the one at Southampton, at Lynn, Massachusetts.

While the vast majority of the early settlers on the eastern end of Long Island were unquestionably adherents of the puritanical type of religion which, later in the early days, became more or less fused with the Presbyterian form of worship and nomenclature, this in nowise means that there were no Church of England people among



these colonial folk, but rather that they were so far in the minority numerically that they could not maintain regular churches and the expenses of the rector's salary. As will be shown later, the spirit of this minority people was not only keen to have the preferred form of worship, but alert to take every opportunity to organize themselves into a church body. It was Lord Cornbury whose domineering characteristics caused him to be despised by many of the dissenters, but who nevertheless, was able at the turn of the Eighteenth Century as the Royal Governor of the Province of New York, to be of great help in organizing the Church of England on Long Island.

The early records show that there was a steady drifting of many of the so-called dissenters, and especially the Quakers, back into the established Church which was termed "Protestant" or "Reformed Protestant", when communities held the regular Prayer Book Services. When William, Prince of Orange, became the sovereign of the British Isles, there was an obvious trend on the part of the American Dutch Colonists to become affiliated with the mother Church, for they possessed a feeling that their own Dutch ruler, now a member of the established Church by virtue of his office, could not by his own example in religion lead them astray. It is amazing how many of the Dutch family names, as well as those of the English dissenting families, appear on the records of the Episcopal Church in its early beginnings.

Since the eastern part of Long Island had been largely settled by colonists from New England or by immigrants who stopped temporarily in Connecticut or its adjacent borders, and then crossed to Long Island, one can readily understand that there was actually little desire for the liturgical services of the Church of England. Coupled with this, the government of New Netherland was rather zealous to see that the worship of the majority be kept as Protestant as possible. For example, Governor Stuyvesant and the Council on February 26, 1654, passed an ordinance which forbade "the keeping of Ash Wednesday and all other holy days, as heathenish and popish institutions, and as dangerous to the public peace".

The settlers on the eastern part of Long Island naturally felt a loyalty to New England and especially to New Haven and Hartford, and in consequence, placed themselves under the government of Connecticut. There was an extended controversy between the Dutch government of New Netherland and Connecticut which was not settled until the treaty of Hartford in 1650. By this agreement all towns west of Oyster Bay were to be under the Dutch government, and all towns east of Oyster Bay were to be under the Connecticut government. This seemed to work out well until 1664 when the Dutch surrendered to the British. Then the Duke of York and his government claimed dominion over the whole island. This lasted until 1673 when the Dutch forces captured New York and the temporary governor, Anthony Colve, regardless of the Hartford Treaty of 1650, issued a proclamation requiring all towns to send deputies to New York "to make their submission to the States General and the Prince of Orange".

Fortunately for the Church of England, the treaty of peace of 1674 restored New York to the English, and Governor Andros again brought the whole island under the Duke of York's government. Governor Dongan arrived on August 27, 1683, with express instructions to convene a General Assembly without delay. Among the many things which the settlers in the New World wanted was the right to have a voice in the government by their own representatives, freely chosen. Thus, when Governor Dongan's request was made to hold a General Assembly, the several towns proceeded at once to hold elections and to select their representatives. They had won out in their democratic ideas and hence entered with zest into this which promised to be the road to an ideal form of government.

Setauket (now Brookhaven Town) was settled in 1655 largely by colonists from Massachusetts, but as in other Suffolk County towns, while the predominating type was the Puritan yeoman, still there was a sprinkling of Church of England people. Not only was there Lion Gardiner, of whom there is some doubt as to his church preference, on his Isle of Wight, but the Floyds and the Tangier Smiths and others on their princely estates. The social customs of Brookhaven and of most of the other towns in the county lacked the austerities of New England, being more in conformity with those in the Southern Colonies.

According to Mr. Edward P. Buffet, the late antiquarian who lived in the home of William Sidney Mount, the genre painter, in Stony Brook and wrote a brief historical sketch of the Brookhaven Church, there appears to be good reason to believe that shortly after the settlement of the town, the independent religious organization established under the Town Meeting government was Anglican. The town records show that in 1671 William Satterly was ordered "to be in the place of a Church Warden" to see that the minister's rates were paid. Again, Mr. Samuel Eburne, who was elected to be the minister of the town and parish in 1685, covenanted, "in regard of some tender consciences that he would omit the ceremonies in the booke of Common Prayer, in publick worshipe \* \* \* or administration of the Sacraments, excepting to such persones as shall desire the same". Mr. Eburne was an early freeholder of the town and although his personal status in a legal document was "clerk", still the provision that he might administer the Sacraments according to the Book of Common Prayer, implies that he was an ordained priest. Later, Mr. Eburne was sent by "the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts", which was organized in June of 1701 in the library of the Archbishop of York, into New England. We find him in 1703 serving as a clergyman on the Isle of Shoals.

In 1693, under Governor Fletcher, an act was passed for the establishment of churches in certain counties and for the levying of taxes for their support. Shortly after this, in 1697, Trinity of New York received its royal charter. Queens County was named in the law, but Suffolk was ignored as not ripe for the Episcopacy. Dispute as to the statute arose. Some contended that the taxes thus raised were available for the dissenting ministry while the Governor and



others held and prevailed that the proceeds were for Anglicans only. We need not deny the charge that the Established Church did at times impose itself upon an unwilling people, but we can remember that the Puritans, where they had control, taxed and even persecuted "dissenters" from their doctrines and usages. Neither party had as yet grasped the necessary principle of religious liberty and that its safeguard lies in the neutrality of the state.

Obviously, this first Church of England in easterly Long Island at Setauket went out of existence, for the Rev. Samuel Eburne's ministry there proved to be short and stormy. Soon he had to sue the townsfolk for his salary of £60, alleging that not a penny had been paid. Shortly after this episode the Town Church is found calling itself Presbyterian, although loosely, as distinguished from Congregational. Certain it is that in 1704 the Rev. Dr. Vesey, the rector of Trinity, New York, stated to the clergy on Manhattan Island that in Suffolk County there was "neither Church of England minister nor any provision made for one by law, the people generally being Independents, and upheld in their separation by New England emissaries". He suggested that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel send missionaries to them, but nothing is heard as to any action being taken. The writer doubts the statement that "for nearly twenty years the east end of Long Island was visited by but one clergyman of the Church of England, namely, the Rev. John Sharpe, Chaplain of the forces in New York, who accompanied the colonial governor, Lord Cornbury, on a tour of inspection and officiated as occasion offered". This could not have been later than 1708 for in that year Lord Cornbury's office terminated.

Suffolk County was more of an appendage to Connecticut than to New York. This was true in early colonial times when towns at the eastern end of Long Island placed themselves under the jurisdiction of New Haven. A sailing ship with a fair wind could go from shore to shore in two hours, while a coach on a sandy road to New York would require many days. Yale College with its excellent library, which included a number of books on Anglican Theology, was a tower of strength in the early days, for many of the more fortunate families on Long Island sent their sons to New Haven to be educated.

The faculty of Yale and a number of Congregational ministers began to read the Anglican Theological books and the more they read, the less confidence they felt in their own ecclesiastical position. On the 12th of September, 1722, the day following Commencement, seven of these gentlemen appeared in the college library to confer with the trustees and other ministers. They voiced their qualms concerning the validity of their ordination and expressed their varying degrees of purpose to enter the Anglican Communion, praying, however, for counsel. Among these were Timothy Cutler, the Rector or President of Yale College and three graduates of the class of 1714, viz., Samuel Johnson, David Browne and James Wetmore. Johnson, called the Father of Episcopacy in Connecticut, later became, in 1754, the first President of Kings College, now Columbia University. On November 12, 1722, Cutler, Browne and Johnson sailed for England as

postulants for Episcopal ordination, and Wetmore the following year. The first three were all stricken while aboard with smallpox and Browne fatally so, dying within a week after his ordination to the priesthood. Men desiring to receive Holy Orders had to go to England, for as yet there was no bishop in the colonies, and we are told that thirty per cent died of smallpox or were shipwrecked.

James Wetmore, referred to above as one of the converts to the Church of England, at New Haven, was ordained by Bishop Gibson in July, 1723, in London, and shortly thereafter became the priest-in-charge of the Brookhaven Church where he continued until he was called to be catechist to the Rev. Dr. Vesey in Trinity, New York. Thus, while we must acknowledge that because of the vicissitudes apparent in colonial days between conformists and nonconformists, the Brookhaven Church did not have a continued establishment between 1685 and 1723, but logically we may assume that the nucleus of the Anglicans continued in a greater or less degree to hold their services according to the Book of Common Prayer, although they did not have a regularly ordained clergyman. On May 11, 1724, the Rev. Mr. Wetmore wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (hereafter referred to as the S. P. G.): "the members (at Setauket) had increased beyond expectation by the accession of such as are men of the best character in Brookhaven." In another letter he sanguinely states that there was a prospect of gaining the whole town "if a sober minister were settled in it". After about two years at Trinity, New York, Mr. Wetmore became the settled pastor at Christ Church, Rye, where he remained until his death, which was caused by smallpox in 1760.

Another of the New Haven converts, the Rev. Dr. Johnson, remained at Stamford until his election to the presidency of Kings College and so frequently ministered to the Brookhaven congregation that the Caroline Church can almost justly claim him as one of its clergy. He wrote in 1727, "We lie upon the sea and directly over against us southward on Long Island lies Brookhaven, about twenty miles over the water where I have often preached." Another tie which bound Dr. Johnson with the Setauket Church was his marriage in 1725 to Mrs. Charity Nicoll, widow of Benjamin Nicoll and daughter of Col. Richard Floyd.

The Rev. Thomas Standard, of Taunton, England, who appears to have been a physician before taking Orders, followed the Rev. Mr. Wetmore as the minister at Brookhaven, and it was he who in 1725 began gathering subscriptions to build a new church. We are told that he brought with him from the society (S.P.G.) a library worth ten pounds, a Church Bible, small tracts, Prayer Books and Osterwald Catechisms. Mr. Dwight followed and then the Rev. Alexander Campbell who shortly sought to be transferred to St. James, Long Island, where obviously there was an established church, but which must have gone out of existence since the present church at St. James claims founding in 1853. He stated that there was a "handsome establishment" perhaps of £60 or more as compared to the subscription of £20 at Brookhaven.



Some time after 1725, perhaps in 1729, the Caroline Church building was erected. A bill to Col. Floyd dated September 17, 1729, for a bell which had been sent, substantiates this date. The bell weighed 132½ pounds and cost nine pounds sterling. At any rate, a bell calling people together for worship must have sounded strange in a town which previously had paid a man "for Beating the drum on ye Lorde's Daye". Eighty years later a new bell was hung in its place.



*St. George's Episcopal Church, Hempstead, Where America's First Native Born Anglican Bishop Received Early Training*

Contemporary with the erection of the Brookhaven Church, originally called Christ Church, was its sacred endowment and change of name, for it was rechristened "Caroline Church" in respect to Wilhelmina-Karoline of Brandenburg-Anspach, Queen of George II, who sent it a silver Communion Service and embroidered altar cloths.

In 1937, through the magnanimous gift of Mrs. Frank Melville and Mr. Ward Melville, the Caroline Church was restored to its colonial beauty, together with additional service facilities, making it one of the most historical and interesting churches in the United States. A list of rectors of this church follows:

1723-24, James Wetmore; 1725-27, Thomas Standard; 1727-29, temporary supplies including Samuel Johnson and Flint Dwight; 1729-33, Alexander Campbell; 1733-46, Isaac Browne; 1746-67, James Lyons; 1769-82, temporary supplies; 1782-86, Thomas Moore; 1786-92, Andrew Fowler (lay reader) and others; 1792-1811, John Sands and others; 1811-14, Nathan Burgess and others; 1814-43, Charles Seabury; 1843-44, William Adams; 1844-78, Frederick M. Noll; 1878-86, Robert



Pearson; 1886-87, James H. Sharp; 1887-1912, Dan Marvin; 1913-17, Stephen H. Green; 1917-34, Charles A. Livingston; 1934-37, R. Thomas Blomquist; 1937-40, Sturgis Lee Riddle; 1940-, John Priestley Mitton.

#### ST. GEORGE'S, HEMPSTEAD

In 1640 the English came to the shores of Long Island and attempted to settle at a place called Nieuw Amerfoord, situated on Jamaica Bay, but the Dutch, who had preceded them by some years, drove them out. Three years later they returned. There is reason to believe that some of these immigrants had not disassociated themselves from the Established Church and, hence, became the nucleus of contention to hold Church of England services instead of the Independent form of worship when taxation for the support of religious services began to take place. This was particularly true in Jamaica and its neighboring towns. They, however, were so in the minority as compared with the dissenters that except for their private or group devotions, they had to yield to the community idea.

While St. George's Church, Hempstead, does not lay claim to being founded before 1702, still the writer finds that in 1644 a former Church of England clergyman, named Richard Denton, who had gone over to the Puritan cause, after ministering for a time in Stamford, Connecticut, arrived with several of his parishioners in Hempstead and here preached and shepherded his flock for twelve years, at the end of which time he returned to England. Cotton Mather, who knew him intimately, wrote: "Richard Denton was a man whose doctrine dropped as the rain . . . though he were a small man yet he had a great soul". For the next twenty-five years Hempstead was without a regularly settled clergyman, but from approximately 1680 until 1696 the Rev. Jeremiah Hobart ministered for a goodly time and was followed for a brief period by a Rev. Mr. Fordham.

We know that about 1696 a certain twenty-three-year-old layman, William Vesey, arrived at Hempstead with all the fire of a crusader and that it was largely due to his efforts that St. George's Church as such came into existence. His earnestness and charm won many of the villagers to the church. A year later he was called to be the rector of Trinity, New York, and left for King's Chapel, Boston, and from thence later to be ordained in England. In 1698 he was inducted into the rectorship of Trinity and there remained as an eminent religious leader for fifty years. Who, if anyone, followed as a pastor at St. George's is not known, but according to the Rev. John S. Haight in his excellent book, *Adventures for God*: "In the year 1701, the town being entirely destitute of a minister, made application to the (newly organized) S. P. G. In pursuance of which the Rev. John Thomas, an Episcopal minister, arrived in 1702." The four succeeding rectors were also sponsored by the S. P. G. and like Mr. Thomas were men of sincerity and consecration.

"It might seem strange that a community composed of Independents, Presbyterians and Quakers, all of whom were hostile to the Church of England, should practically issue an invitation to a minister in the Anglican Communion to come and serve them." This



can be answered in several ways. The Dutch, especially with the backing of Governor Peter Stuyvesant, were very bigoted, wanting their own particular brand of religious worship to become established in the new country. It has been authoritatively stated that the stout old governor's love of ruling power was also manifest in his having the form of religion according to that of his mother country and that "he hated Lutherans, Independents and Baptists". Because his ordinance against preaching was evaded, there was much punishment administered, the worst being that of Robert Hodshone, a Quaker, who, for preaching at Hempstead, was sentenced to two years of hard labor.



*From an Old Photo of St. George's Rectory, Looking South Across Creek from Front Street, Hempstead*

"When he refused to work he was beaten for three successive days until he fell. Then he was hung up by his hands and beaten until his back was raw." Perhaps the various groups thought that the shelter of the English Church would save them from a tyranny similar to that of Stuyvesant.

In 1692 Benjamin Fletcher, a member of the Church of England, became the governor. He has been called a bigot and a narrow-minded sectarian, but it was he who persuaded the Assembly to pass a bill providing for "settling ministers and raising a maintenance for them not only in New York but in several counties including Queens—one to be in charge of Jamaica and the other to have charge of Hempstead and the next adjacent towns and farms". It would seem that very little happened in regard to this act until Fletcher took a drastic step and organized a group of laymen, who held services in the various communities. George Keith, about whom we shall hear later, was appointed to make a tour of observation throughout the colonies and in 1702 we find him in Oyster Bay and Hempstead.



Due to the efforts of Governor Fletcher, the Rev. Dr. Vesey, the Rev. Mr. Keith and the laymen's group, the people of Hempstead assembled on an evening in June, 1702, to make application to the S. P. G. for a minister, and thus it was that the Rev. John Thomas and the four later clergymen were sent by the S. P. G. to be the pastors or rectors of St. George's, Hempstead.

The present church edifice, retaining much of the colonial appearance of the original building, was erected in 1822 near the site of the former church which had served since 1735, and on the 19th of September, 1823, it was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. John Henry Hobart, the Bishop of New York and Long Island, who had been the rector of this parish in 1800. Again, like the Setauket Caroline Church, it is one of the most interesting and historical in the United States and is still the proud possessor of the Prayer Book, Chalice and Paten given by Queen Anne in 1710.

A list of the rectors here follows:

Rev. John Thomas.....	1704-1724
Rev. Robert Jenney.....	1726-1742
Rev. Samuel Seabury.....	1742-1764
Rev. Leonard Cutting.....	1766-1783
Rev. Thomas Lambert Moore.....	1785-1799
Rev. John Henry Hobart.....	1799-1800
Rev. Seth Hart.....	1800-1829
Rev. Richard Drason Hall.....	1829-1834
Rev. William M. Carmichael, D.D.....	1834-1843
Rev. Orlando Harriman, Jr.....	1844-1849
Rev. William H. Moore, D.D.....	1849-1892
Rev. Creighton Spencer.....	1892-1901
Rev. Jere K. Cooke.....	1901-1907
Rev. Charles H. Snedeker.....	1908-1924
Rev. John S. Haight, B.D.....	1924-

The story of the Quakers founded by George Fox in 1640 in England and his initial efforts in 1673 when he made an extended tour of observation from Maine to South Carolina, during which, after he left Massachusetts, he found people who looked upon him as "one sent of God", and again in 1675 when he came with a ship load of Quakers to our "East Jersey", not to mention William Penn and his colony of 1681, forms an interesting item in the history of the Episcopal Church in the colonies and on Long Island. A certain George Keith, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, who for thirty years had been a Quaker, and later having been employed as a land surveyor by the Quakers in Salem, "East New Jersey", proved himself a minister and champion of the Friends Society and a veritable David against the Philistines. Shortly, however, he began to intimate that while the "Inner Light" was necessary, it needed something besides itself. The "Candle should have a candlestick", the "spirit must needs have a body". After a period of controversy within the body of the Friends, he was expelled. Keith went to Eng-



land, supposedly on business, and while there reviewing his theological tenets, became attached to the Church of England and took Holy Orders.

The S. P. G. sent as their first missionaries George Keith and Patrick Gordon, the latter of whom will be referred to a bit later.



(Courtesy of F. Kull)

*Caroline Episcopal Church, Setauket*

John Talbot, the chaplain of the ship *Centurion* on which they were making the voyage, became so interested in their mission that he obtained the S. P. G.'s permission to join with them. Keith and Talbot made an extended trip from Boston to Charleston under the expressed instructions of the S. P. G. "to preach in meeting-houses whenever opportunity might offer, and where possible, to win them back to the Church". There is evidence that there was an inclination on the part of many of the dissenters in America during the first half of the eighteenth century to return to the Church of England if the way could be made easy for them. We are told that in "Philadelphia and its vicinity hundreds of Quakers were baptized by Keith and

Talbot and that in the southern counties they were welcomed in the Independents' meeting houses, where they preached and commended the Church to all who heard them''.

The efforts of Governor Fletcher to establish the Church of England on Long Island were apparently ineffective but, nevertheless, led to some action in founding Grace Church, Jamaica, St. James in Newtown and St. George's, Flushing, as well as St. George's, Hempstead.

In 1699 there was a united action of the Church of England people in Jamaica who claimed the exclusive use of the stone church building which had been erected by the people in general, but without complete success. While Grace Church was definitely organized in June, 1701, the first specific local appointment by the S. P. G. was made to Jamaica, March 20, 1702, in the person of the Rev. Patrick Gordon, at the written request of prominent local churchmen, endorsed by others in New York City.

Of the seven men who came to Jamaica and other towns from the S. P. G. before 1704, Messrs. Gordon, Keith, Bartow, Honeyman, Urquhart, McKenzie and Muirson, Lord Cornbury in 1705 wrote: "They have behaved themselves with great zeal, exemplary piety and unwearied diligence in discharge of their duty in their several parishes."

The Reverend Patrick Gordon was evidently the first appointee to Grace Church from the S. P. G. after a meeting in London which discussed the missionary work in the United States. Unfortunately, Mr. Gordon, after his arrival here, was taken ill the day before he was to conduct his first service and died some eight days later of a fever. He was interred under the Communion Table in the Stone Church, July 28, 1702.

Flushing in 1702 was a quiet farming hamlet, the majority of whose inhabitants were members of the Society of Friends, and the "Old Quaker Meeting House" was the only place of public worship. Into this quiet town came George Keith, the former zealous follower of George Fox, but now a missionary of the S. P. G. Some years before, as an accepted minister of the Quakers, he had visited Flushing and Oyster Bay. On a bright Thursday morning in September, 1702, when the Friends were about to meet for worship, Keith, in company with the Reverend William Vesey, Rector of New York's Trinity Church, and the Reverend Mr. Talbot and others, entered the meeting house. Keith took his seat in the preacher's gallery and waited during the solemn silence which is an impressive form of the Friends worship. At the proper time he rose and began to speak, "announcing himself as a minister and missionary of the Church of England, whom the Queen and the Bishops had sent to preach in the colonies."

There were, of course, loud protests and remonstrances, and "the scene which followed was not to edification". We are not apologists for Keith's uncouth actions, but he was a zealous convert and behaved as such, basing his rights on his statement: "None of your speakers have any right to speak in your meeting houses, because



you have not your meeting houses licensed as the Act of Toleration requires, nor have any of your preachers qualified themselves as that act expresses; viz., to sign thirty-four of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. This you have not done, nor can you do, whereas I am qualified as the Act requires."

He again visited the meeting house in Flushing on a Sunday in December with similar results, and while we cannot for a moment countenance his acts in this respect, yet we must confess that his enthusiasm as a worker and builder in those days was not too different from the persistency of many of the licensed or itinerant preachers in other religious bodies. We must remember it was 1702 and not 1946. Wherever he and Talbot could bring together the scattered members of the Church of England, they did so and they organized them into congregations. This was particularly true in Hempstead and Jamaica, as well as in Flushing where, through their efforts, a successful impetus was given to the work of the Established Church as was also the case at Newtown, Oyster Bay, Huntington and elsewhere on Long Island. True it is, nevertheless, that many of the Quakers and Independents were brought back into the fold of the English Church through the indefatigable efforts of this George Keith and his able assistant, John Talbot.

It is certain that these two missionaries had much to do in gathering the few scattered families of the mother Church in Flushing and Newtown and in organizing them into congregations, later to be known as St. George's Church and St. James' Church, respectively, which were commended to the care of the Rector in Jamaica.

The Reverend James Honeyman, in 1704, had been commissioned by the Governor, Lord Cornbury, to act as the second or temporary minister in Jamaica, with its dependencies at Flushing and Newtown. Obviously, he raised a veritable tempest about him. He writes: "To this parish (Jamaica) belong two other towns, viz., Newtown and Flushing, the latter famous for being stocked with Quakers, whither I intend to go, upon their meeting days, on purpose to preach lectures against their errors". By the middle of 1704 he had gone to Newport, Rhode Island, where he established a church and remained for forty-five years as its honored and revered rector. The third rector of these three parishes, the Reverend William Urquhart, was appointed by the S. P. G., July 27, 1704, and found the work difficult. Colonel Heathcote wrote in 1705: "Mr. Urquhart, minister in Jamaica, has the most difficult task of any missionary in this government—having a Presbyterian Meeting House on the one hand and the Quakers on the other, and very little assistance in his parish."

The Reverend Thomas Poyer ministered in these parishes from 1710 until 1731. He describes Newtown as "A place well affected, desirous to have a minister", but Flushing he describes as a town of Quakers. However, in his reports to the S. P. G., dated May 3, 1711, he writes: "I thank God the Church of England increaseth, for among the Quakers at Flushing . . . I have seldom so few as fifty hearers." In 1713 he states that he often has "more than an hundred hearers". He did an excellent amount of work, including continuous

parish calling in Jamaica, Flushing and Newtown, and distinguished himself among his people by his sermons and lectures. The fact that he declined an offer of four hundred pounds to go to the West Indies while his stipend of these three churches was little more than the fifty pounds which he received from the S. P. G. and the partial taxes "in kind", giving as his reason that "he feared Jamaica, Newtown, and Flushing would be left without a clergyman", proves that his heart and soul were in the work of these difficult parishes. He died on December 31, 1731, having fought a good fight and having written to the S. P. G. toward the end of his ministry: "I have labored faithfully in my Lord's vineyard and in my private advice from house to house as well as public discourses, I have exhorted them in faith in Christ and amendment of life, and to live in love."

The Reverend Thomas Colgan followed Mr. Poyer in 1732 as the rector and continued until 1755. It was during his incumbency that the Episcopal churches in Jamaica, Flushing and Newtown were built.

Grace Church was opened on Friday, April 5, 1734, for the first service, and it was a notable event in Jamaica. There is no reason assigned for thus naming the church. The origin of the name has been traced to a Grace Church Street, in London, where there was a church popularly called the Grass Church, because of the holding of a market close by, and spreading grass on the ground.

It was during the Rev. Mr. Colgan's ministry that the church at Flushing was also built, largely due to a certain Captain Hugh Wentworth, a merchant in the West Indian trade, who gave the ground and contributed a goodly sum towards the erection of the church. St. George's Church was finished and first used for worship in 1746. At Newtown the religious work for the Established Church had also been progressing under his able leadership, and in 1735 St. James' Church had been completed and used for worship.

Mr. Colgan wrote, November 22, 1740: "We have yearly for seven years last past increased in church members. So those buildings are generally well filled in time of Divine Service, and the worship of God is duly performed with decency and good order, the several sects which are around us do look upon the Church with a more respectful eye than formerly." Mr. Colgan died in December, 1755, "lamented and respected by all who knew him".

The Reverend Samuel Seabury, Jr., next became the rector of the three parishes and while there attracted many prominent gentlemen, such as Mr. John Aspinwall, a retired merchant who had left New York to take up residence in Flushing, and a Mr. Thomas Grenell, a loyal and active churchman. Through Mr. Aspinwall's good offices a school was established in Flushing and the schoolmaster, a certain Mr. Treadwell, was induced to become the lay reader so that services might be held every Sunday instead of but once in three weeks. Soon thereafter Mr. Seabury caused requests to be made for charters for each of the three parishes.

One of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Episcopal Church in this country, and in the history of the Church on Long



Island, is Samuel Seabury, who was consecrated in Scotland in 1784 as the first Bishop in the United States. Bishop Seabury was one of a family which for five successive generations has been represented in the ministry and in government affairs. The Bishop's father was the Reverend Samuel Seabury, M.A., who at the time of the birth of his son, Samuel, in 1729, was acting as a licensed preacher among the Congregationalists in Groton, opposite New London, Connecticut. Sometime after this the elder Seabury became a convert to the Church of England and went to England for ordination. Upon his return he was settled in charge of St. James' Church, New London, from which, in 1743, he removed to Hempstead, becoming the rector of St. George's and there remaining until 1764 with missions at Oyster Bay and at Huntington.

During this period the future bishop prepared for Yale College, which he entered in 1744, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1748. From this college he afterwards received the degree of Master of Arts and this same degree later from Kings College, now Columbia. Following his graduation from Yale, being too young to be ordained in the Church of England, he was appointed by the S. P. G. to be a Catechist at ten pounds per annum at Huntington, some twenty miles distant from his father's parish at Hempstead. During these three or four years he studied medicine, as well as theology, for his father before him had prepared himself to minister to the bodily as well as the spiritual needs of his parishioners.

In 1752 he set out for his ordination in England, but since he would not attain the age for ordination until 1753, he spent one year at the University of Edinburgh studying "Physics and Anatomy" before going to London to take Holy Orders. In accordance with the approbation of Bishop Sherlock, who was then the incumbent of the See of London, he was ordained to the Diaconate on December 21, 1753. Through a special dispensation on the part of the Bishop of London, he was ordained to the Priesthood on the following Sunday by the Bishop of Carlisle, acting at the request of and in place of the Bishop of London.

Upon his return to America in 1754, he was assigned to the church in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he remained but three years, having before the end of this cure taken up his residence in Jamaica.

In 1757, Governor Hardy gave to the younger Seabury the cure of the parish in Jamaica which still was connected with the less thriving churches in Flushing and Newtown. In one of his reports he refers to Flushing as being "The seat of Deism and Infidelity", and he complained that not only was the work of conversion difficult, but there was also great backwardness in attending the church, her "Services and Sacraments". Mr. Seabury's stipend for all three churches amounted, apparently, to eighty pounds per annum, which was something more than that of the proverbial English Curate who was "passing rich with Forty Pounds a year". Constant clashing between the church people of Flushing and Newtown, who wanted a rector of their own, and Jamaica, at last wore out the patience of

Mr. Seabury and, in 1765, he resigned his charge and moved to Westchester where he was still acting as the rector of the parish when the War of Independence broke out. Having taken the oath of allegiance to the King, he was seized by the patriots and taken to Connecticut. After his release he did medical work and the occasional functions of a priest.

At the close of the war he was elected the Bishop of Connecticut. When he went to England for his consecration as a Bishop, he found it impossible to be consecrated in England because, as he was now a citizen of the United States, he could not take the oath of allegiance to the crown. Hence, he appealed to the non-juring Bishops in Scotland who would not take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary and their later successors of the House of Hanover, in the following form: "Can consideration be obtained in Scotland for an already dignified and well-vouched American clergyman now in London for the purpose of perpetuating the Episcopal Reformed Church in America, particularly in Connecticut?" This request was distinctly favorable on the part of English prelates who believed that this act should be accomplished, and hence, Samuel Seabury was consecrated "The Bishop of All America" by the three non-juring prelates, Kilgour, Petty and Skinner, at Aberdeen, November 14, 1784.

After Bishop Seabury's return from England in 1785, he took the rectorship of New London, Connecticut, where he died, February 25, 1796. His son, the Reverend Charles Seabury, served as rector of Caroline Church, Setauket, which then included the missions at Huntington and Islip, from 1814-1844. The Reverend Samuel Seabury, son of Charles, was ordained in 1826 at Halletts Cove, then part of Newtown Parish. He officiated for about seven years in parishes in Brooklyn, Jamaica, Huntington and Oyster Bay, and as a classical professor at the Muhlenberg Institute in Flushing. His son, the Reverend William Jones Seabury, who became the Professor of Ecclesiastical Polity and Law in the General Theological Seminary in New York while holding no cure on Long Island, frequently officiated in many of its parishes. William Jones Seabury's son is the Honorable Samuel Seabury, who is still living. In addition to holding many prominent positions in Jurisprudence and in Political Affairs he is one of the first citizens in New York City and in New York State.

After Mr. Seabury's (the future Bishop's) departure from the rectorship of the three parishes of Jamaica, Flushing and Newtown in 1765, they were without ministers for three years. However, through the kindly intervention of Dr. Auchmuty, the rector of Trinity Church, New York, the Reverend Joshua Bloomer became the rector in May, 1769, and remained as such until 1790.

The War for Independence caused a cessation of relationships between the mother Church in England and its dependent churches in the colonies, but in 1784 the Rev. Mr. Bloomer sent the last report of Grace Church to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the same year in which the last grant of £30 was made by the Society.



We read that in the summer of 1786, in accordance with the resolution of the Church Wardens and Vestry of Grace Church at their annual meeting, a subscription was made by twenty of the parishioners amounting to £42 5s for shingling, painting, and other necessary repairs "for rendering the church decent and fit for public worship".

At the death of Mr. Bloomer in 1790, the Rev. Mr. Hammell succeeded as the rector of the three parishes and was the last rector elected and supported jointly by these three vestries. He continued until 1795. Later the Rev. Elijah D. Ratoon(e) was called to be the rector of Grace, Jamaica, and St. George's, Flushing. "The acceptable and prospering ministry of Mr. Ratoon was, unhappily for Grace Church, not long continued." He resigned June 4, 1802, to take charge of St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

By this time St. George's, Flushing, was prepared to support a minister of its own, and in 1803 the Rev. Abram L. Clark was inducted as the rector. The succeeding rectors were: The Rev. Barzillai Buckley, 1809-20; the Rev. John V. E. Thorne, 1820-26; the Rev. Wm. A. Muhlenberg, 1826-29; the Rev. Wm. H. Lewis, 1829-33; the Rev. J. Murray Forbes, 1833-34; the Rev. Samuel R. Johnson, 1834-35; the Rev. Robert B. Van Kleeck, 1835-37; the Rev. Frederic J. Goodwin, 1837-44; the Rev. George Burcker, 1844-47; the Rev. J. Carpenter Smith, S.T.D., 1847-97; the Rev. Henry D. Waller, D.D., 1898-1920; the Rev. William C. Craver, 1921-24; the Rev. George F. Taylor, S.T.D., 1926-30; the Rev. Hubert S. Wood, 1931 through 1943; the Rev. Dougald L. MacLean, January 1, 1944-.

Obviously, the parish in Newtown, now Elmhurst, was either more inclined to the Episcopal Church or possessed more devoted members, for there are records to substantiate that St. James' Church had become independent in 1795 and that from 1797 on had rectors of its own, with the exception that from 1803 to 1809 it shared the Rev. Abram L. Clark as its rector with Flushing. The rectors of the parishes in Jamaica, Flushing and Newtown remained the same until 1795 when Newtown called the Rev. Henry Van Dyke. Elmhurst's succeeding rectors follow: 1797, the Rev. Henry Van Dyke; 1803, the Rev. Abram L. Clark; 1812, the Rev. William E. Wyatt; 1814, the Rev. Evan M. Johnson; 1827, the Rev. George A. Shelton, D.D.; 1864, the Rev. N. W. Taylor Root; 1868, the Rev. Samuel Cox, D.D. (afterwards Dean of the Cathedral of the Incarnation); 1889, the Rev. W. Hudson Burr; 1890, the Rev. Edward Mansfield McGuffey, D.D.; 1929, the Rev. Charles Lawson Willard; 1940, the Rev. George Wellman Parsons.

From 1802 Grace Church continued as a parish without its dependency in Flushing. For the following six years there were at least six ministers in charge, namely, the Rev. Messrs. White, Strebeck, Fowler, Ireland, Barry and Clowes.

Grace Church, on May 1, 1810, unanimously elected the Rev. Gilbert Hunt Sayres to officiate for them. They agreed to pay him seven hundred and fifty dollars annually, in two equal payments, with provision for six months' notice, should a separation be desired

by the church or by the rector. The total income of the church during the first year, 1811, including interest on invested funds, was \$904.84, of which only one-third was paid in subscriptions and collections. There was an average of about sixty pew holders during Dr. Sayres' ministry from the whole township of Jamaica.

Under Mr. Sayres, there was a larger number of baptisms than had previously been recorded, and the services of a Bishop to administer the rite of confirmation were quite frequently employed. It was a time of growth in neighboring churches in Long Island.

The Hon. Rufus King, who had taken up residence in Jamaica and who earlier had distinguished himself as a delegate to Congress from Massachusetts in 1784, became a warden of the parish in 1805. To him was largely due the interest and repeated aid to that church which so materially affected the condition of Grace Church. He died April 29, 1827.

The ministry of the Rev. William Lupton Johnson, D.D., was twice as long as that of Rev. Dr. Sayres, and was the most extended and fruitful in its results of all of the rectorships since the founding of the church. It began in February, 1830, and ended at his death, August 8, 1870. Around Grace Church were gathering a number of intelligent and vigorous families, of social respectability and financial ability. It possessed an influence in affairs of the great city with which it was in frequent association in business, in professional and political circles.

On New Year's morning, 1861, Grace Church edifice was totally destroyed by fire. Fortunately, the silver sacred vessels and the Alms Basin, which had been presented by Queen Anne, were not consumed, and remain to this day as treasured possessions.

"From the ashes of the old Church rose in eleven months a Church edifice worthy of the faith and self-denials, prayers and labors which for more than a hundred and fifty years had here maintained the ancient liturgy, the principles and faith and character of the Anglican Church." This graceful and beautiful edifice was completed and furnished and consecrated within two years after the old church was consumed. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop Potter of New York whose diocese included Long Island.

From this time on Grace Church has maintained not only its historical significance as being the oldest regularly established parish on Long Island, but its eminent reputation of accomplishments and good works. It has been among the foremost of the churches in the diocese in making generous contributions for missionary purposes and in sharing in the founding of charitable institutions and in furthering all worthy causes. A complete list of the rectors herewith follows: The Rev. Patrick Gordon, 1702—died without serving; the Rev. John Bartow, 1702-03; the Rev. James Honeyman (temporary), 1703-04; the Rev. Mr. Urquhart, 1704-09; the Rev. Thomas Poyer, 1710-31; the Rev. Thomas Colgan, 1732-55; the Rev. Samuel Seabury, Jr., 1757-66; the Rev. Joshua Bloomer, 1769-90; the Rev. William Hammell, 1790-95; the Rev. Charles Seabury (a deacon, served 6 months); the Rev. Elijah Dunham Ratoon(e), 1795-1802; the Rev.



Calvin White, 1802-04; the Reverend Messrs. George Strebeck, Andrew Fowler, John Ireland, Edmund D. Barry, Timothy Clowes, all served within the next six years, 1804-10; the Rev. Gilbert Hunt Sayres, 1810-30; the Rev. Wm. Lupton Johnson, D.D., 1830-70; the Rev. George Williamson Smith, S.T.D., LL.D., 1872-81; the Rev. Edwin B. Rice, 1882-92; the Rev. William Bottome, 1893-96; the Rev. Horatio Oliver Ladd, A.M., S.T.D., 1896-1910; the Rev. Rockland T. Homans, 1910-30; the Rev. Joseph T. Titus, 1930-.

Prime, in his history of Long Island, suggests that there might have been Church of England services regularly held in Brooklyn in the seventeenth century, and it would seem logical that while the British were the authoritative government in the colonies, and certainly while Long Island was held by the British forces, there were Prayer Book services conducted by Priests of the Church or by the Army Chaplains on the western end of Long Island.

#### ST. ANN'S, BROOKLYN

The history of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn Heights, as the mother Church of Brooklyn, is very brief and does not claim its founding until after the middle of the eighteenth century. It became the parent Church of St. John's, 1827; Christ Church, 1835; St. Mary's, 1836; the two St. Paul's (Flatbush, 1836, and Carroll Street, 1849). These churches in turn, as did St. Luke's (1841), became parent churches.

In 1784 Brooklyn had a population of less than twenty thousand inhabitants. In the same year that Samuel Seabury was consecrated the first Bishop in the United States, a few Church of England folk in the village of Brooklyn, near the ferry to New York, gathered together to form a permanent congregation in Brooklyn. Their minister was the Reverend George Wright.

The meeting place of the congregation was two communicating rooms in the residence of Garrett Rapelye, on the premises now known as 43 Fulton Street. When the Rapelye house was pulled down shortly afterwards, the congregation met for a time in the barn of Henry Middagh, behind his house where Fulton and Henry Streets now meet. It soon moved into a building that had been a barracks for British soldiers, at the corner of Middagh and Fulton Streets, which was decently refitted as a church. All these changes must have taken place within a year, for in 1785 the first church was consecrated—a frame dwelling on Fulton Street opposite Clark Street. On April 23, 1787, the congregation was incorporated as "The Episcopal Church of Brooklyn", and in 1787 it was admitted to the Diocese of New York, the fifth church on Long Island to be so admitted, following in the steps of Grace Church, Jamaica; St. George's, Flushing; St. James', Elmhurst, and St. George's, Hempstead.

On June 22, 1795, it was reincorporated under a new ecclesiastical law, and the name was changed to St. Ann's Church. A new stone church was built facing Sands Street at the corner of Washington, and was consecrated in 1805. Still another, of brick, was built on the same site in 1825. The present building at the corner of Clinton and Livingston Streets was begun in 1867 and finished in 1869. It was consecrated in 1880.

The first Sunday School was started in 1828 by the Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine, the rector at that time. Five years later a schoolhouse was built under the rectorship of the Reverend Benjamin C. Cutler.

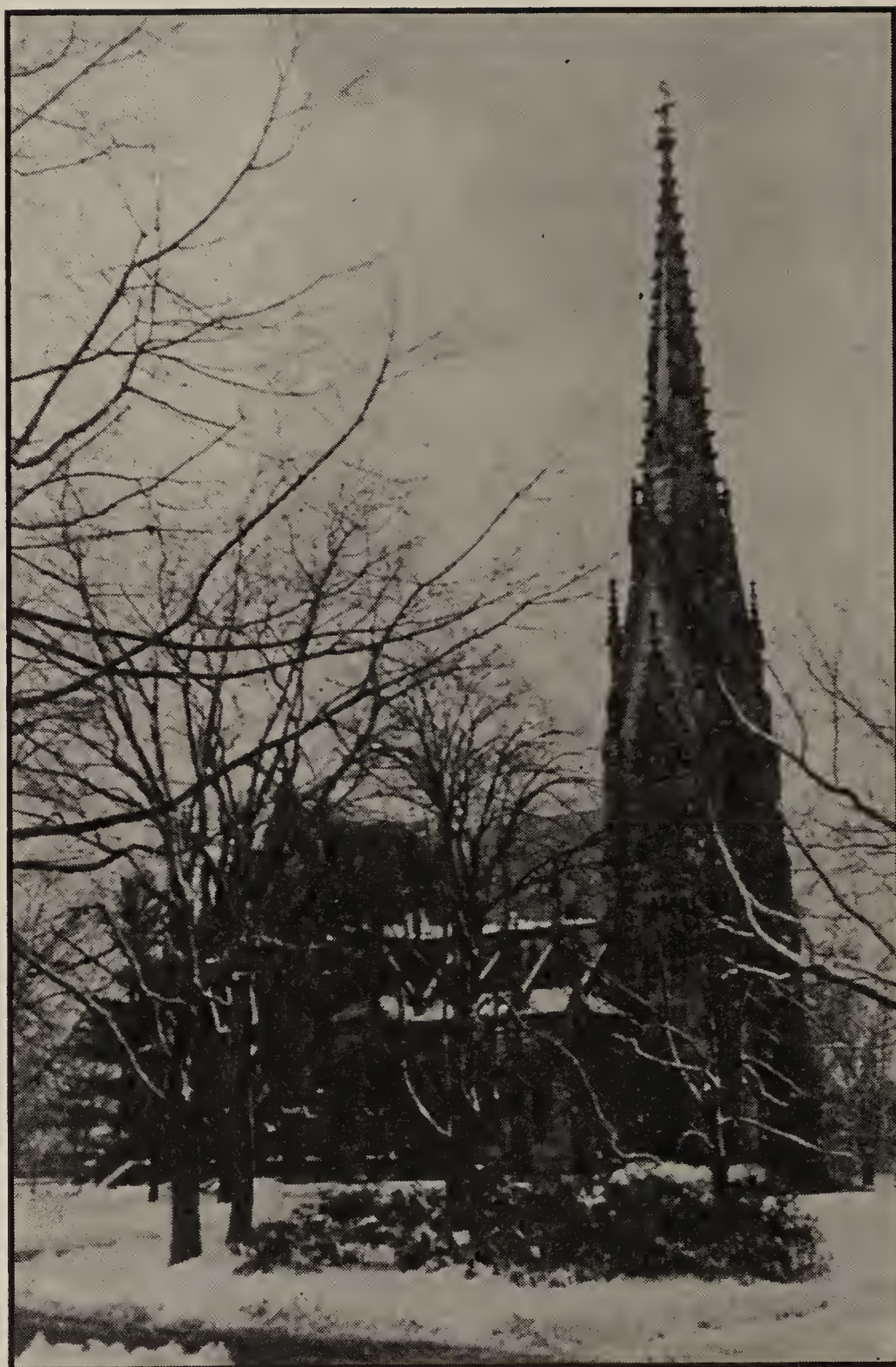
Five rectors of St. Ann's subsequently became bishops. The Rev. John P. K. Henshaw was made Bishop of Rhode Island in 1843; the Rev. Henry U. Onderdonk became assistant Bishop of Pennsylvania in 1827; the Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine became Bishop of Ohio in 1832; the Rev. George Ashton Oldham became Bishop of Albany in 1929; the Rev. Frank Whittington Creighton became the Missionary Bishop to Mexico in 1926, then Suffragan Bishop of Long Island in 1930, and later, in 1937, the Bishop of Michigan. The rectors were as follows: George Wright, 1784-89; Elijah Ratoon(e), 1789-92; Ambrose Hull, 1792; Samuel Nesbitt, 1793-98; John Ireland, 1798-1807; Henry J. Feltus, 1807-14; J. P. K. Henshaw, 1814-17; Hugh Smith, 1817-19; Henry U. Onderdonk, 1819-27; Charles P. McIlvaine, 1827-33; Benjamin Cutler, 1833-63; Lawrence H. Mills, 1863-67; Noah Hunt Schenck, 1867-85; Reese F. Alsop, 1886-1906; Rev. C. Campbell Walker, 1907-17; Rev. G. Ashton Oldham, 1917-22; Rev. Frank W. Creighton, 1923-26; Rev. Samuel Dorrance, 1926-44; Rev. Melville Harcourt, 1945-.

Throughout the colonial period and up until November 18, 1868, the Episcopal churches on Long Island were connected with the Diocese of New York. Since there were at least fifty-three independent churches on Long Island already admitted to the Diocese of New York and several missions almost ready to apply for the standing of regular parishes, and with many missions in this vast area which needed constant attention, together with the opportunities constantly arising for the establishment of new missions on the island, it was deemed both proper and fitting that a new diocese to be known as the Diocese of Long Island be formed.

On the above appointed date in 1868 sixty-one of the clergy from Kings, Queens, and Suffolk Counties, together with one hundred eighteen lay delegates from fifty-three parishes, assembled in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, according to the notice issued by the Right Reverend Horatio Potter, the Bishop of New York, who acted under the resolution of the General Convention of 1868. The diocese was duly organized and on the following day, the Rev. Dr. Abram Littlejohn, the rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity, was duly elected as the Bishop of Long Island. His consecration occurred on Wednesday, January 27, 1869. Bishop Horatio Potter of New York, the Bishop of New Jersey, the Bishop of Western New York, and the missionary Bishop of Nebraska were the consecrators in the Church of the Holy Trinity, of which he has been the rector for eight years.

A most gratifying growth marked Bishop Littlejohn's tenure of Bishopric which comprised thirty-three years. At the Diocesan Convention in 1901, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, Garden City, the churches and missions numbered one hundred twenty-six, and the clergy, one hundred fifty-four, and the money raised for all purposes, \$775,000, as compared to the year 1869 when the total amount raised was \$285,000.





*The Cathedral of the Incarnation at Garden City*



The diocese has ever been of a missionary mind, giving more than one-half of the amounts collected to its initial work in the diocese and to the missionary work of the National Church. The Women's Auxiliary, of which too much cannot be said in praise, has always been a most important adjunct in raising missionary funds, especially for the program of the National Church.

Bishop Littlejohn's Episcopate will be remembered by the establishment at Garden City of the cluster of Diocesan Institutions. It was in September, 1869, that Alexander T. Stewart purchased from the town of Hempstead for \$400,000, somewhat over 7000 acres, forming a part of what was known as "The Plains". Before Mr. Stewart's death in 1876, he had conceived the idea of a great foundation for religion and learning at Garden City, but it was left to Mrs. Stewart to carry out his wishes. On June 28, 1877, in a very impressive ceremony, Bishop Littlejohn laid the cornerstone of the Cathedral of the Incarnation. In the following autumn the two schools, St. Paul's for boys and St. Mary's for girls, were opened in temporary quarters on the estate. In the next few years Mrs. Stewart diligently prosecuted the building operations and in 1883 the large and then magnificent building for St. Paul's School was finished and occupied. In 1884 the Bishop's residence was ready for occupancy and, in 1885, the Cathedral itself was completed and consecrated. When, shortly after this Mrs. Stewart died, it was stated with authority that she had expended on the Cathedral and schools, together with the improvements therewith, over two millions of dollars.

Among the many other achievements during the tenure of office of Bishop Littlejohn, the Church Charity Foundation, founded February 6, 1851, through the indefatigable work of several people, notable among them Mrs. Sarah Richards, Mrs. Henry E. Pierrepont, Mrs. George Hastings, Mrs. Sarah Gracie, and Mrs. S. N. Burrill, together with the Rev. Dr. Vinton, the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Cutler and Mr. Conklin Brush, then the Mayor of Brooklyn, was greatly enlarged both as to its scope and intensity of work in charities, which included the care of the aged and the sick and later, for the orphans and the blind. Bishop Littlejohn, in 1871, began a building program to house these various activities on the land situated between Atlantic Avenue and Herkimer Street and bordered by Albany Avenue, in Brooklyn. On June 23, 1871, he laid the cornerstone of St. John's Hospital. It was in February, 1869, that the *Helping Hand* paper—now *Tidings*—was founded. The training school for nurses was organized in 1896. The home for the blind was also established in 1896.

Among the many valuable workers and supporters of the Church Charity Foundation has been Mrs. Divine F. Burtis, who for fifty-four years has served on the Board of Managers and for thirty-nine years has been the able president of this board. In season and out of season Mrs. Burtis has been most devoted and consecrated to this great work of the hospital, the school of nursing, the homes for the aged and the blind and to the orphanage, and also to the splendid work of St. Phebe's Convalescent Home.

Bishop Littlejohn also inaugurated the "Blessed Work" of the "Sisters Community of St. John the Evangelist", who in turn have



labored most faithfully in both the hospital and the homes for the aged, the orphans, and the blind. The house of St. Giles the Cripple, organized in 1891 by Sister Sarah for the care of crippled children, must be mentioned as one of the accomplishments under Bishop Littlejohn's administration.

On Saturday, August 3, 1901—at the age of seventy-seven years—God in his great wisdom called this beloved Bishop Littlejohn, whose masterly hand and intellectual ability developed the diocese on such safe but still progressive lines that its influence at the present is among the greatest of all the dioceses in the National Church.

The Reverend Frederick Burgess, D.D., who had served for four years as the rector of Grace Church on the Heights, was elected at the Thirty-sixth Annual Diocesan Convention, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City, to succeed the Right Reverend Abram Littlejohn. Bishop Burgess was consecrated on January 15, 1902, in Grace Church, Brooklyn Heights. His consecrators were Bishop Henry C. Potter, Bishop William Croswell Doane of Albany; Bishop John Scarborough, New Jersey; Bishop William David Walker, North Dakota and Western New York; Bishop George Worthington, Nebraska; Bishop Thomas Frederick Davies, Michigan; Bishop Junius Moore Horner, Asheville, North Carolina, and Bishop Du Moulin of Niagara.

During Bishop Burgess' administration of twenty-three years there was continued growth and development of the suburban sections of Long Island, which afforded a vast opportunity for the expansion of the Episcopal Church. His work is outstanding because of his conservative and scholarly training and his intense desire to see the diocese progress. He was greatly beloved by the clergy and all who came in contact with him. During his administration he built upon the sure foundations of those already laid by his predecessor, emphasizing the spiritual cure of souls and the establishment of churches and missions throughout Long Island. Before his death on October 15, 1925, he felt his health was failing and, therefore, asked for a Co-adjutor Bishop. His was truly a great work in God's vineyard—"lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes". Truly he merited the reward of God's elect, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In accordance with Bishop Burgess' request for a Co-adjutor Bishop, the Reverend Ernest Milmore Stires, D.D., was elected at the Annual Diocesan Convention in Garden City on May 26, 1925. While he was the Co-adjutor Bishop-elect, Bishop Burgess died and, therefore, his election became that of the Bishop of Long Island, rather than the Co-adjutor Bishop. The consecration of Bishop Stires took place October 15, 1925, in St. Thomas' Church, Manhattan, where he had been the beloved rector for nearly twenty-five years. The consecrators were Bishops Talbot, Murray, Manning, Brown, Slattery, Brent, Lawrence and Lloyd. Bishop Stires' tenure was marked by his masterly practice of spirituality, kindness and diplomacy.

It was during Bishop Stires' administration that the new St. John's Hospital and the beautiful "Walter Gibbs Memorial Chapel"

were built, facing on Herkimer Street, adjacent to the old St. John's Hospital and the Home for the Aged and the Blind. Many new churches and missions came into existence during his administration. His work became so heavy that he found it necessary to have two Suffragan Bishops and hence, the Rt. Reverend John Insley Blair Larned, D.D., who at the close of World War II became the Bishop in charge of the European churches, and the Rt. Reverend Frank W. Creighton, S.T.D., who later became the Bishop of Michigan, were elected in 1929 and in 1933, respectively.

Bishop Stires, at reaching the retirement age, realizing the great possibilities of the work on Long Island and feeling that a younger man could better accomplish the work, resigned in 1942. The diocese regretfully accepted his resignation, for, indeed, he had been a real father in God and had given unstintingly of his life for the upbuilding and progress of the Diocese of Long Island.

At a special convocation of the clergy and laity of this diocese on February 10, 1942, the Rev. James Pernette De Wolfe, D.D., was elected the fourth Bishop of Long Island having, from June 23, 1940, served as the Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. He was consecrated May 1, 1942, in the Cathedral of the Incarnation. The consecrators were the Rt. Rev. Henry St. George Tucker, D.D., S.T.D., LL.D., Bishop of Virginia and Presiding Bishop of the National Church; the Rt. Rev. William T. Manning, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Bishop of New York; the Rt. Rev. Ernest Milmore Stires, D.D., L.H.D., D.C.L., LL.D., the retiring Bishop of Long Island; the Rt. Rev. Harry Tunis Moore, D.D., LL.D., the Bishop of Dallas; the Rt. Rev. Clinton S. Quin, D.D., of Texas, and the Rt. Rev. Robert M. Spencer, D.D., of West Missouri.

Bishop DeWolfe's administration has been marked with unusual success for he possesses to an exceptional degree the gifts of a real servant of God, the intellectuality of a theologian, the acumen of an administrator and the fine qualities of a very excellent preacher. He came to the diocese when the change in population, both in Brooklyn and Long Island, was marked and when the exigencies of World War II offered greater opportunities and necessities for an expanding work. He has at all times proved himself to be of self-sacrificing service to both his clergy and the many congregations on the island.

It is interesting to note that in 1868, when the diocese was formed, there were canonically resident ninety clergymen, and in 1946 there were canonically resident 207 clergymen; and that while in 1868 there were 75 churches and missions, in 1946 there were 169 churches and missions; and that the missionary gifts in 1946 were \$140,897.75, of which amount \$46,305.00 was given for missionary purposes to the General Church and the balance used for missionary work in the diocese.

It seems most fitting to speak of Dr. Raymond F. Barnes, the Treasurer of the Diocese of Long Island, who began to make his contributions to the Episcopal Church in Long Island in 1919 when he was made the treasurer of the nation-wide campaign. From that time on he has served on the Diocesan Council, has been a delegate to



eight consecutive General Conventions, served as a member of the Program and Budget Committee of the General Convention, and the treasurer of this diocese and its various funds since 1926. In 1929 he was elected the Treasurer of the General Convention, which office he has filled ever since. In 1930 he was elected a trustee of the American Church Building Fund Commission; in 1931 he was made the agent of the General Properties Fire Insurance Corporation and, in 1939, he was made a superintendent of Construction of the City of New York, Department of Housing and Building. Besides the many Diocesan and National Church offices which he has faithfully filled, he has been a director of the First National Bank of Jersey City, a trustee of the South Brooklyn Savings Bank and a member of the firm of Marsh and Barnes Servicing Unit (real estate and mortgages). On June 9, 1937, Hobart College, in recognition of Dr. Barnes' inestimable services to the Church at large, conferred upon him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws.

Dr. Barnes will long be remembered for his indefatigable work in organizing the finances of the diocese and in the systematizing of the many diocesan endowment funds and investments. Largely through his efforts the histories of the various parishes, as well as the parish registers of many of the extinct churches, have been collected and placed in the archives of the diocese. His work has been of far-reaching value to the diocese and to the National Church.

The seal of the Diocese of Long Island was designed by the Rev. Beverley Betts. The heraldic terms may seem rather obscure in their significance, but are here given in the words of the designer: "The elegant and significant coat of arms, or, a chevron barry-wavy, argent and azure between three crosses, crosslet fitchy gules, which was devised by the present writer as episcopal arms of the Diocese of Long Island and as the basis of the corporate seal of the Cathedral at Garden City." "The shield is of gold and with the crosses is a part of the arms of the MacDonalds, ancestors of William Alexander, Earl of Sterling, first Lord Proprietor of Long Island. The chevron, with barry-wavy lines, blue on silver, is also part of his arms. These tinctures are the well-known Stewart colors, and contain a graceful allusion to the benefactions of Mrs. A. T. Stewart by whom the cathedral at Garden City was founded and endowed. The arrangement of 'barry-wavy' is the conventional symbol of 'waters' and with the Biblical motto below, 'I will set his dominion in the sea', indicates the insular 'jurisdiction'. The crosses, customary emblems of the Christian religion, are red. The mitre is of gold with lining and bands in red, indicating the episcopal character of the corporation."

"Much significance attaches to the jewels of the mitre. Of these the five rubies represent the five wounds of Christ, the three sapphires have reference to the Trinity, and the two emeralds are symbols of the dual nature of Christ, the human and divine. These precious stones were chosen as being especially significant and appropriate from the allusions made to them in the Scriptures: the ruby suggesting charity, dignity, divine power; the sapphire, constancy, truth and virtue; the emerald, immortality."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### *The Quakers of Long Island\**

JACQUELINE OVERTON

NO HISTORY of Long Island, religious or secular, would be complete that failed to record the part played by the steadfast, sturdy group of men and women whom Peter Stuyvesant and others of his day dubbed "the heretical and abominable sect called Quakers."

Some came to this country to gain material benefit but the majority of them came to win freedom and peace and to sow the seed of spiritual convictions. And their lot, like others in those early days who differed from the established church and had opinions of their own which they were not afraid to air, was a difficult and bitter one, especially under the rule of Dutch governors. But undaunted by persecution of the worst kind they kept serenely on their way, in step with their faith, increasing in spiritual strength, in influence and in numbers until they contributed a substantial element in Long Island's development.

The founder and inspiration of the Society of Friends (called Quakers) was George Fox, born in Drayton, Leicestershire, England, in 1624, the son of a poor weaver.

George Fox was apprenticed to a shoemaker and between whiles tended sheep but neither could hold him long. Deep down within him was a yearning for spiritual satisfaction, for an answer to many things that perplexed him and there was no answer nor little stimulation for such a restless, inquiring one in the little hamlet of Drayton.

One source of satisfaction he had: the Bible. A short time before his birth, 1611, it had been translated into the King James Version. There was no other book so splendid and reading and pondering over it, especially out of doors, was his one delight.

The established church offered him very little help though he earnestly sought an answer to his questions from first one priest and then another, even travelling as far as London. Most of those to whom he went for help evidently considered him just another strange and disturbing young man and they offered him all types of advice from "taking a wife to taking tobacco".

George Fox had no early ambition to become a leader, had no idea that a powerful religious society was to be born out of his own wanderings in search of truth. He was only a boy when he began his quest and it was only after he became convinced of the truth within himself, gained through years of doubt and sorrow and meditation,

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\* This paper was read before the New York State Historical Society at its meeting in Garden City, September 28, 1939.

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that he began to share what he had found for his soul's comfort with many others rich and poor whom he discovered were seeking also.

William Penn described George Fox as "an original", "no man's copy". Certainly he must have had the ability to draw people to him through his quiet enthusiasm and earnestness. His message, as one has said, "like the man himself was clear, direct and simple." Religion for him, he had finally discovered, was a way of living. It must start within one's self.

In the midlands of England he began his ministry and those who gathered about him first called themselves "Children of Light", though happily they soon changed their name to Friends.

Fox besought his followers to rid themselves of questions of dogma and turn their attention to the Spirit of Christ which had been put within their own souls. He gave a new meaning to silence as a part of worship, bidding them sit still and listen and let the Divine power work from within. Above all he preached sincerity and honesty both within themselves and in their dealings with others and likewise urged simplicity in living and in speech.

In the midst of the unrest and extravagance of the England of Charles the First, Fox wanted to spread a religion, a way of life, that would give everyone an opportunity to be what God intended him. He longed to change unfair systems, unjust laws that bound and hampered. A splendid ideal, a great vision that others had had before his day and since his time, but to change the world is a difficult thing as he and his followers soon found.

George Fox was a fearless and tireless idealist and once his mission seemed clear nothing daunted him. He was ready to challenge whatever seemed wrong.

He and his followers met out of doors or in barns and one another's houses, refused to contribute to the established church and boldly challenged some of its practices which seemed to them meaningless or lacking in sincerity. A Friend's word must be enough; they refused to take oaths or support the army and they were imprisoned in consequence likewise for disturbing the peace by their preaching. "In the early days Fox and his followers were often put in jail not so much for teaching heresy as for breaking the peace. The absence of ecclesiastical organization made them seem like vagrant ranters and their refusal to pay tithes or to testify under oath or lift their hats before a magistrate kept them perpetually liable to punishment for contempt of court."

In 1650 George Fox spent a full year in a Derby prison for "declaring the truth" and it was in Derby that Friends were first called Quakers.

"The time has come for men to quake and tremble before the Lord" declared Fox when he was being questioned in the Court of Justice. Whereupon the judge said: "So you are Quakers" and the name clung to them thereafter.

Growth was slow and discouraging but despite hardship and bitter persecution Friends increased and preachers both men and women developed within their ranks to carry their message not only to other parts of the British Isles but abroad as well.

In an age when women held a subordinate position, George Fox believed in every way she was man's equal and companion. As one historian has said: "He did not debate about women's rights, he proclaimed their equal privileges and responsibilities". Hence as years went on there were almost as many women as men who preached the message of the Society of Friends at home and abroad and when Quakers founded schools and colleges they were coeducational.

According to so distinguished an authority as Rufus Jones, "the first Quaker in America was Richard Smith of Long Island." He visited England in 1654, two years after the Society of Friends was born, met William Dewsbury (a disciple of George Fox), became "convinced" and returned to Long Island and was the lone Quaker here before the first of their missionaries arrived.

Three women were among the eleven Quaker preachers who sailed for America in 1658. The majority of these eleven went to Rhode Island, but three remained here and in the liberal settlement of Gravesend, Long Island, presided over by the redoubtable Lady Deborah Moody, the first Quaker meeting in America was held by Robert Hodgson and two associates.

Gravesend was called the "Mecca of Quakerism". No such reception awaited Hodgson when he and his co-workers tried to preach in Jamaica and Hempstead, both of which were strong in the established church and violently opposed "to Quakers or any such opinionists".

In Hempstead, Hodgson attempted to hold a meeting on Sunday in an orchard, was arrested, and locked up in the house of the constable. After which the constable proceeded to attend service in his own church and returning found Hodgson preaching to a crowd from one of the windows of his own house.

The following day Hodgson was driven out of Hempstead at the tail of a cart and imprisoned in New York, suffering horrible treatment on his refusal to work or pay a fine. The first of countless such cases to follow before Quakerism became established. "In the meantime," says John Cox, "it spread like fire in the stubble through the untheocratic English townships of Flushing and Oyster Bay."

Certain names stand out in the establishment of Quakerism on Long Island. Among them are John and Hannah Bowne of Flushing.

Hannah attended the meeting of Quakers and became one of them. Shortly afterwards John, "deeply impressed by the beauty and simplicity of their worship" likewise became one of the Society offering his house as a place of worship. Friends met in the house of John Bowne for almost forty years before they built their own meeting house in 1694 and he was made to suffer for it.

In 1663, as an example to other Quakers, he was transported to Holland, but upon "manifesting his case to the West India Company in Amsterdam, they did not utter one word tending to the approval of anything that had been done by way of religious persecution and Peter Stuyvesant was advised to be more lenient with nonconformists."

After two years John Bowne returned to Flushing and the worst of persecution ceased in New Netherland.



Hannah Bowne preached both here and in England and to John Bowne's house in Flushing came George Fox in 1672 to visit and to preach, to gather such a crowd of listeners that the house could not hold them and they met together under the wide-spreading branches of an oak tree. Fox's Oak, as it was called for many years, has gone now but John Bowne's house, built in 1661, still stands in Flushing, lived in by his descendants today.

[In October, 1945, the Bowne house was dedicated as a shrine to religious freedom. It is now open to the public under the sponsorship of the Bowne House Historical Society.]



*The Bowne House, Flushing, Home of Quaker John Bowne*

As the home of John Bowne was a Quaker refuge on western Long Island, so the home of Nathaniel and Grissel Sylvester on Shelter Island at the eastern end offered welcome to persecuted Quakers. Sylvester Manor was a haven on Long Island as Swarthmore Hall was a haven in England, and some came to Sylvester Manor who had strength to go no farther and were buried within the Manor garden, like Lawrence and Cassandra Southwick.

James Bowden in his *History of the Society of Friends* says that "except on Shelter Island and in the colony of Rhode Island there was not at this time a rock in the colonies of North America on which a Friend could land without being persecuted."

Today within the entrance of Sylvester Manor stands a monument to Nathaniel Sylvester. On its south side it bears record among other things, of—"The suffering for conscious' sake of Friends of Nathaniel Sylvester. Most of whom sought shelter here including George Fox, founder of the Society of Quakers and his followers."



Half yearly meeting at Oyster Bay on May 23, 1671, was a great occasion. John Bunnyat, a travelling Friend and preacher from England, on that occasion presented them with a letter from George Fox promising to visit them shortly.

Enclosed was a copy of his *Paper of Advice*, The Basis of the Discipline of the Society of Friends, together with an unbound book about 11 x 7 inches in which minutes were to be kept. So the earliest existing minutes and perhaps the earliest written minutes of an American Quaker meeting was recorded that day in this book.

George Fox was with them at the next Half Yearly Meeting May 23, 1672, according to his diary, having first visited Gravesend and Flushing.

He preached from a granite boulder still to be seen on an estate in Oyster Bay, bringing courage and inspiration to those who had been trying to follow and spread his teaching. After which he proceeded to Shelter Island, where, according to his diary, "mosquitos abounded."

He returned to Oyster Bay in August of the same year and the following October we find record that Anthonie Wright deeded a piece of land on which to build a meeting house. Thus Oyster Bay has the distinction of being the first Long Island settlement to build a Quaker Meeting House and encourage other groups of Friends to do the same.

The Oyster Bay Friends together with those at Matinecock and Locust Valley were part of a continuous chain extending down the center of Long Island, having meetings at Jericho, Westbury, Bethpage, Jerusalem.

Travelling Quaker ministers, women and men, continued to come from the mainland and England. They must have needed every ounce of their enthusiasm for the cause to cope with some of the discomforts they encountered as they made their way from meeting to meeting. Often they were comfortably lodged at the home of other Friends but frequently they stayed where best they could.

Here is a typical extract from a diary kept by one travelling preacher dated July 23, 1702:

"From Staten Island we landed within night on Long Island near a small house of a poor Dutchman who had only one bed; and he laid me down a coat on the floor and a little chair at one end of it with a pillow upon it, so that I lodged but very indifferently, besides there were fleas and mosquitos a-plenty. However, I was well contented, the presence and healing virtue and goodness of the Lord being with me. I got good water to drink, but little victuals; and in the morning set forward and missed my way several times, they being generally Dutch people in that part of the Island whose directions in the ways I could not well understand."

There is no space here to tell the interesting history of individual Meetings on Long Island or the substantial and constructive work which Friends have accomplished at home and abroad, the schools



they have established or their work with Negroes. One must speak, however, of the early Quaker's attitude toward slavery.

The holding of slaves, or indentured servants, was once an accepted custom in this country.

Friends at first were not forbidden to own them, the matter was made one of individual responsibility, left to their own conscience.



*Friends Meeting House, Glen Cove, Built in 1725*

Gradually with their strong convictions of spiritual equality, more and more became "concerned" over the matter and there is record of individual manumissions on Long Island long before the Revolution. Moreover, no slave was given his freedom without adequate provision being made for his welfare.

Many of these early manumission records are still to be found on Long Island. One dated Cow Neck (Manhasset) 3rd Month 15 day 1776 reads:

I, Phoebe Dodge of Cow Neck, having for some years been under concern of mind on account of holding negroes as slaves and being possessed of a negro woman named,



Rachel, I am fully satisfied it is my duty, as well as a Christian act to set her at liberty, and I do hereby set her free from bondage.

Phoebe Dodge

Witness Adam Mott  
Stephen Mott

In 1760 John Woolman, a gentle but forceful preacher against slavery, aroused such sentiment against the practice that before the Revolution few slaveholding Quakers remained on Long Island.

In later years when slavery became a national question the part played in the Underground Railroad by Jericho Quakers is well known.

The same Phoebe Dodge who freed her slaves likewise was a preacher among Friends, and in 1752 had "divine drawings in her mind to travel to England." The records of the Westbury Meeting dated 2nd Month 26th day 1752 say she had "the consent of her husband to go and the approval of Friends."

On her return Phoebe Dodge brought testimonials from Wales and the ministers and elders of London stating that "she has visited the meetings of Friends in diverse parts of this nation and her labors of love in the service of the Gospel has been comfortable and edifying and her conversation as becomes a minister of Christ."

In like manner, eighty and more years later, Rachel Hicks of Westbury began her ministry in this country, travelling as far west as Indiana, new and rough country in those days which might well tax a sturdier person than Rachel Hicks.

In her memoirs written by herself, she modestly says "I have made no account of the number of miles I have travelled or meetings I have attended, fearing it might seem like boasting."

The years of the Revolution brought new hardships to Long Island Quakers. Since they steadfastly refused to take any part with the fighting forces they were made to suffer in various ways, and their goods and chattels were confiscated for the use of the army.

Throughout the British occupation of Flushing the meeting house was variously used as prison, barracks, hospital and storehouse, naturally suffering considerable damage thereby. Similar treatment was accorded other meeting houses in these parts. At the close of the war the repairs were cheerfully paid by various Meetings, all reimbursements from the British being steadfastly refused.

During the Revolution, Yearly Meeting which had always been held in Flushing was transferred to Westbury. Since 1794 it has been held in New York.

In the year 1748, was born at Rockaway one whose name was destined to go down with that of George Fox, in the history of Quakerism. This was Elias Hicks, by trade a carpenter and surveyor. He married Jemina Seaman of Jericho, settled on a farm there, and helped to build the Meeting House near by. As a young man Elias Hicks had a "hungering mind" and seven years after his marriage we find in the records of the Westbury Monthly Meeting that on the 29th of the Fourth Month 1778 he was recommended by that Meeting as a minister.



From that time on for the next fifty years, Elias Hicks' life was devoted to the cause of the Society of Friends. He travelled literally thousands of miles afoot and on horseback preaching at various Meetings and keeping a diary as he went. He was a tireless worker and a fearless preacher. There is evidence as Elizabeth Bond writes, that Elias Hicks had not only a hungering mind, but that he had in marked degree the open mind, and that he accorded to others liberty of opinion. It is said he was unwilling that his discourses be printed,



*Friends Academy, Locust Valley*

lest they become a bondage to other minds. He wrote to his friend William Poole: "Therefore every generation must have more light than the preceding one; otherwise, they must sit down in ease in the labor and work of their predecessors." Among other things he was deeply concerned with the question of slaveholding and might be said to have been a power behind the act of 1817, becoming fully effective in 1827, which abolished slaveholding in New York State.

In the latter years of his ministry however, difference began to arise in the midst of the body of Quakers between those who followed the more advanced and liberal teaching of Hicks and those who clung to certain tenets carried over from the established church and called themselves Orthodox.

Differences increased bringing bitterness and misunderstanding in their wake until in the year 1828, to the distress of Friends, the so-called "separation" came, the Orthodox going their way to set up

their own Meetings and Discipline and the followers of Hicks continuing their own Meetings, being known, thenceforward, as Hicksite Quakers.

Long Island Quakers, as a majority, remained Hicksites and there was little or no break in some of the Meetings. In Westbury however, the Orthodox withdrew and built their meeting house adjoining the old one. Meeting was held in both houses until a few years ago when the few remaining Orthodox returned to share in the Hicksite Meeting. The two houses still stand side by side.

Today services are held in the Brooklyn Meeting House and in Flushing, Matinecock (Locust Valley), Manhasset, Westbury, Jericho and Bethpage. There are two large schools supported by Friends on Long Island: one in Brooklyn, another in Locust Valley.

As years have gone on Quakers have become more liberal in matters of dress and pleasures, but the principles of their faith remain steadfastly the same and they are ever ready to take their share in any constructive work for the good of their country and community.

Under the auspices of the American Friends' Service Committee their work for relief and rehabilitation abroad during both the 1st and 2nd World Wars has been outstanding in its scope and efficiency. Throughout the 2nd World War the Westbury-Jericho Friends' Sewing Group alone sent more than 2000 new and used garments overseas yearly. This was typical of the contribution made by Long Island Quakers.

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Friends live comfortably and well but simply, without show or extravagance and with reverence for the traditions associated with the fine old homes that have come down to many of them.

The men and women who built these simple, spacious homes generations ago may have lacked color in their garments and worshipped in a church gray and plain to bareness, but they put a glory of color into their flower gardens and cherished their trees and orchards and wide fields as gifts from God.

With the exception of the Bowne house at Flushing, which has now been made a national shrine of religious freedom, none of these homes is left at the western end of Long Island; the city has crowded them out. But behind great old trees along the Jericho Turnpike in Westbury, around the ponds and the crossroads at Jericho, and tucked away on by-lanes in Locust Valley and Oyster Bay such old homes and gardens still exist as a reminder to us of "those who, led by the inward voice, have bequeathed the goodly inheritance of their memories to their descendants."





## CHAPTER XXIV

### *Methodism on Long Island*

REV. ALSON J. SMITH

**D**R. N. S. PRIME in his *History of Long Island* tells us that in 1656 a woman in Easthampton complained that "her husband had brought her to a place where there was neither gospel nor magistracy." She immediately discovered that she was wrong about the magistracy for the town fathers sentenced her "to pay a fine of three pounds or stand one hour with a cleft stick upon her tongue" for her insubordination. But Methodists, at any rate, would have agreed with her as far as the absence of the gospel was concerned. No Methodist voice was raised in hallelujah on Long Island until the year 1764, and on the whole length of the island from Wallabout to Montauk there was no church building consecrated to Methodist worship until 1785.

Methodism came late to the old island, and when it did come it had a hard row to hoe. The "Independent", or Congregational-Presbyterian churches of the early Puritan settlers were firmly entrenched in most of the settled parts of the island, with a sprinkling of Church of England establishments here and there, and the Dutch Reformed pastors were zealous in the areas adjacent to Manhattan. And when the Methodists did arrive they had to bear a weighty burden that had kept their mother church, the Church of England, from spreading extensively—their British ties. Not until some time after the American Revolution was New York and Long Island Methodism able to shake off the taint of Toryism.

The first Methodist sermon to be delivered on Long Island was by one of the most talented preachers who ever lived—the eminent colleague of John Wesley's, the Rev. George Whitfield. Whitfield, burning with evangelical fervor, made a trip to Boston by way of Long Island in the year 1764, and between January 23rd and February 3rd of that year he preached at Easthampton, Bridgehampton, Southold, and Shelter Island. A great revival was beginning in that year on eastern Long Island, and the probability is that Whitfield had been invited to preach by the local clergy of the Independent churches. His headquarters during this preaching tour was the mansion of Thomas Dering, Esq., of Shelter Island, a devout Presbyterian layman. After concluding this series of sermons, Whitfield embarked across the Sound from Southold and preached in New London, Norwich, Providence and Boston.

Doubtless a good many people were converted by the eloquent Whitfield during his tour of eastern Long Island, but we have record of only one—Samuel L'Hommedieu, Esq., who died at Sag Harbor on March 7, 1834. L'Hommedieu's family in later years recalled hearing him speak of his conversion by Whitfield, and of helping to con-





*An Old Photograph of Sag Harbor's Methodist Episcopal Church*



struct a raft to convey Whitfield and his horse and carriage from Southold to Shelter Island.

From New England Whitfield wrote at least two letters to his host, Thomas Dering, both enthusiastic about the revival on Long Island. In the last one, written from Boston and dated May 2, 1764, Whitfield exclaims: "And is Shelter Island become a Patmos?" It hadn't—quite, but the seed had been scattered and some of it had fallen on good ground. Whitfield had not tried to set up Methodist societies, but he had preached a lively Methodist gospel, and when the first Methodist circuit-riders came out to eastern Long Island from John Street Church in New York after the American Revolution they found many who remembered Whitfield's preaching and were eager to be enrolled as members of Methodist societies.

It was two years after Whitfield's tour, and on the other end of the island, that Methodism as such took root.

In the year 1766 Captain Thomas Webb, a Methodist local preacher recently retired from the British army, began preaching in New York. Webb was a picturesque-looking man, powerfully built, and with a patch over one eye. He invariably preached in his scarlet uniform and laid his sword beside the open Bible, a practice which was held against him and the Methodists a few years later when scarlet uniforms became decidedly unfashionable. In spite of these theatricals, however, Webb was a gifted preacher. He began preaching on Long Island at the home of his wife's parents in Jamaica in 1766 and organized a small society there, the exact number of members and date of organization being unknown. However, we do know that by 1768 he was also preaching at Newtown, half way between his "in-laws" house in Jamaica and John Street Church in New York. Preaching at Newtown was in the home of James Harper, a young Englishman whom Webb had known in England, and the house was located in the fields on what is now Metropolitan Avenue. By the end of the year 1768 Webb estimated that about "twenty-four were justified" in Newtown, of whom twelve were Negro slaves. His preaching was at its best about this time—"a fire and hammer to break the flinty heart".

It was here in the "New Towne", in the section now known as Middle Village, that the real beginning of organized Methodism on Long Island must be recorded. It was here alone on Long Island that Wesley's friend and missionary, the Rev. Joseph Pilmoor, preached in 1770; it was here that the Rev. Francis Asbury, later Bishop Asbury, preached in 1772, and it was here, largely through the munificence of the same James Harper in whose house the early preaching took place, that the first Methodist meeting house on the island, and one of the first in the New World, was erected in 1785 at the corner of Dry Harbor and Juniper Swamp roads.

The American Revolution dealt a grievous blow to the Methodist work on Long Island, and after the American defeat at Flatbush in 1776 and the subsequent British occupation it became impossible for the Methodist preachers in New York to visit the new societies on the island. Not until 1784 were the circuit riders again able to cross from Manhattan. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have



carried on Methodist work during the war anyway, for, as previously mentioned, Methodism was associated in the public mind with Britain. John Wesley himself had rebuked the American colonists for their revolt against the king, and many of the Methodists in New York and the middle colonies were known Tories or Tory sympathizers. Two founders of John Street Church in New York, Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, had fled to Canada together with a large part of the congregation, and, while the great majority of Methodist preachers were loyalists and some even fought in the Revolutionary armies, the Tory coloration of the whole Methodist movement was distinct enough to make it inadvisable to try to carry on extensive missionary work during the war.

Once the war was over, however, the circuit riders returned to Long Island. They were pleasantly surprised to discover that, while the Jamaica society had withered on the vine, the one at Newtown was still flourishing and a new Methodist group was established farther out on the island at Winne-Commack. This latter society had been organized by Methodist local preachers in the British Army of Occupation, and was holding its meetings in the home of a tailor who had subsisted during the war by making uniforms for the British. The society at Newtown, too, had been ministered to by Methodist local preachers with the British forces. Little wonder that their loyalist neighbors looked askance at the Methodists!

In the year 1784 the "Christmas Conference" at Baltimore initiated the beginning of systematic Methodist work in America, and the Rev. Philip Cox was appointed to the supervision of the work on Long Island—said "work" consisting of the two small societies at Newtown and Commack, with a total of some two dozen members, half of them were Negro slaves! But Cox entered into his new appointment in good spirit, and before a year was over he had organized two more societies, at Searingtown and Hempstead Harbor (now Roslyn). At the former place he had preached in the home of Hannah Searing, an aged widow, and the name of Searing was henceforth to be closely associated with the development of Methodism in that part of the island, just as the name of Harper was in Newtown and Brooklyn and the name of Raynor in the central part. It was at Searingtown that the second Methodist church on Long Island was erected, in 1788, and this church still stands as the oldest Methodist edifice on the island. The house of Coe Searing, in which Bishop Francis Asbury preached in 1787, is also still standing in Searingtown and is occupied by a faithful member of the Searingtown church.

In the following year, 1785-86, the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, who had been converted as a boy by Freeborn Garrettson and who was later to become one of the leading figures of early Methodism in America, was appointed to the Long Island circuit. He promptly organized two more societies, at Musketo Cove (now Glen Cove) and Near Rockaway, or "Clinktown", a community five miles south of Hempstead Village which was located in the section now a part of Rockville Centre. By the end of the year 1786 Cooper was able to report six societies and 154 members in good standing. He also reported a somewhat invidious comparison between the brethren at Searingtown and those at

Near Rockaway: "The people at Searingtown" he said, "are somewhat more wealthy and intelligent than those of Rockaway, but are destitute of the saving knowledge of Christ".

In 1789 the people at Commack built a church—the third on the island—which is still standing and in use today. This church and the active society at Commack were to be rallying points from which



(Photo by Fred Kull)

*Methodist Church at Searingtown, 1785*

Methodism spread over the central part of the island. In 1790 the Near Rockaway society built a church, and it was in the burying-ground of this little church that the 139 victims of the terrible shipwrecks of the winter of 1836-37 were buried. (The *Bristol*, inbound from Liverpool to New York, broke up in a gale on Far Rockaway beach on the night of November 21, 1836, with a loss of seventy-seven lives. The barque *Mexico*, also inbound from Liverpool to New York, was wrecked on Hempstead Beach, near what is now Seaford, on the night of January 2, 1837, with a loss of sixty-two lives.) Most of the victims of these two disasters were Irish immigrants and Roman Catholics, and it is one of the ironies of fate that they should be interred in a Methodist burying-ground.

In 1790 the struggling society which had been established in Brooklyn by the Rev. Woolman Hickson in 1787 became a part of the



Long Island circuit, and in 1791 the Rev. Benjamin Abbott and the Rev. William Phoebus were assigned to the circuit. In 1791 one or the other of them—probably Abbott—organized a society at Patchogue. This society built a church jointly with the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists in 1794 and the four groups continued to use the same building until 1831, when the Baptists and Presbyterians “ran down”. The Congregationalists bought the old building and the Methodists went ahead and built a church of their own, which was opened for services in 1833.

It was just thirty years after George Whitfield’s initial sermon at Southold that a Methodist preacher was heard in that part of Suffolk County. In June of that year three good women were praying in a house in Southold for a Methodist itinerant to visit that region. One of the three, Mrs. Abigail Ledyard Moore, was sure that the Lord had heard the prayers and would answer. So she was not surprised a few days later when a strange man in the garb of a Methodist circuit-rider rode up to her door. It was the Rev. Wilson Lee. She opened the door and said, “Thou blessed of the Lord, come in.” A congregation was soon gathered and the Rev. Mr. Lee preached from the text “These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also”. The following year Southold was entered on the list of preaching places for the Long Island circuit, and after a great revival in September of that year the Rev. John Clark organized a class. In 1818 there was another great revival in the course of which seventy persons were converted, and a church was built.

This, then, brought Methodism up to the turn of the century. The foundations had been securely laid. There were societies, by the year 1800, in Newtown, Brooklyn, Commack, Searingtown, Hempstead Harbor, Near (or East) Rockaway, Patchogue, and Southold. There were church buildings in all but Hempstead Harbor and Southold, although as previously mentioned the Patchogue edifice was shared with three sister denominations.

Meanwhile, Methodism in Brooklyn had been developing independently, not as a part of the Long Island circuit, but as a missionary enterprise of the John Street Church in New York. (At this time, it must be remembered, Newtown was much more accessible from downtown New York than was Brooklyn.)

Captain Webb preached in Brooklyn about the same time that he was preaching in Jamaica and Newtown, but at that time Brooklyn was an unimportant collection of scattered farms with no population to compare with Jamaica and Newtown. Whatever work Webb did in Brooklyn is buried in statistics of John Street Church in New York, and if he enrolled any members in Brooklyn they were doubtless counted as belonging to John St. There was no organized effort in Brooklyn until after the American Revolution.

In the year 1787, however, the Rev. Woolman Hickson appears out of nowhere to preach from a table in New St. (later Sands St.) near what is now the Brooklyn end of the Brooklyn Bridge. Like most of the other early Methodist preachers he had come up from Maryland, and his last recorded appointment is in 1786, “to the Baltimore circuit”. How and why he came to Brooklyn is hard to

say, but here he was to be found, early in 1787, preaching to a scattering of farmers in a pleasant country lane lined with trees and commanding an excellent view of green fields sloping down to the edge of the bay. At the conclusion of this initial sermon Hickson offered to return to Brooklyn and preach regularly if a suitable meeting place could be found, whereupon a cooper by the name of Peter Cannon offered the use of his cooper shop down near the ferry. His offer was gratefully accepted and here, in 1787, Hickson organized the society from which all of Brooklyn Methodism was to develop. In 1788 Hickson has departed from the scene and the little society in Brooklyn is under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Dickins of New York, a minister of John St. Church, and a remarkable man who was later to become known throughout Methodism as the founder of the Methodist Publishing House.

By 1790 Brooklyn had gotten out from under the wing of New York Methodism and had joined the Long Island Circuit, but it was still a small and struggling society. The work there was not unrewarding, however, for in 1791 Benjamin Abbott writes in his diary: "I received my appointment to Long Island and accordingly took my station. The next day I preached (in Brooklyn) to a small congregation with life and power. The Lord attended the word with success. Some young ladies were cut to the heart, and one gentleman cried out for mercy, and before meeting ended he found peace and joined the society. Next day I went to Newtown."

The work in Brooklyn went ahead, and by 1794 the preachers (there were two of them by this time) considered Brooklyn important enough to spend a month there and then a month on the rest of the island. But by 1796, by which time a church had been erected in Sands Street, Bishop Asbury was still unimpressed. He writes in his journal: "I went over to Brooklyn where we have a small society. I had very few hearers except those who came from the city (New York). I administered the sacrament and we had some life. We then returned to the city, where I preached to about 1600 people, some of whom were wicked and wild enough. . . . Oh, when will the Lord appear as in ancient times?"

In 1794 the church in Sands Street was incorporated under the title "The First Methodist Episcopal Church in the town of Brooklyn, Kings County, Nassau Island (the name given to Long Island by the Act of 1693, which was never repealed) and at a meeting held on May 19, 1794 at the house of Peter Cannon the following were elected to the first Board of Trustees: John Garrison, Thomas Van Pelt, Burdett Stryker, Stephen Hendrickson, Richard Everit, and Isaac Moser. They purchased from Joshua and Comfort Sands a lot fronting on New Street, later to be known as Sands Street, and began the erection of a church. On Sunday June 1, 1794, the Reverend Jospeh Totten of the Long Island Circuit preached the dedicatory sermon. This church, later known as the Sands Street Methodist Episcopal Church, was the mother church of Kings County Methodism, and for decades was the largest and most active Methodist congregation on Long Island.



In 1795 Brooklyn became for the first time a separate station. The Rev. Jospeh Totten was the pastor, and the membership was thirty-nine. By 1798, the first year for which accurate records are available, there were fifty white and twenty-six colored members.



*Smithtown Branch Methodist Episcopal Church*

The presence of these colored folk among the congregation was the cause of entries like this one in the old record books: "Jacob and Susan, joined together in marriage, Oct. 12, 1807, by me, ELIJAH WOOLSEY—Consent of George Bennett, Owner."

Even in Brooklyn, early a center of Abolitionist sentiment, slavery was an accepted institution until about 1825.

In 1799 James Harper, the no-longer-young Englishman who had befriended Captain Thomas Webb and in whose house at Newtown



the oldest known Methodist society on Long Island was organized, moved to Brooklyn, to become keeper of the town poor-house. As in Newtown, his house immediately became headquarters for the Methodist preachers, who boarded with him for the sum of \$3.25, or 26 York shillings per week. This practice continued until 1808, when Joshua Sands cancelled the last \$100 due him for the land on which the church was built and donated a lot for a parsonage on High Street adjoining the church property. This gift so enthused the trustees that they built not only a new parsonage but a new church, which was completed in 1810 at a cost of \$4200, \$260 of which was accounted for by the sale of the old building to George Smith, a member of the church, who moved it to Jamaica Turnpike (Fulton Street) opposite High.

The new church contained a feature not found in the old—a “gallery for Africans”. Presumably the colored members had heretofore sat in the main body of the church with the rest of the congregation. What this new “gallery for Africans” had to do with it is hard at this point to say, but in 1818 the seventy-four colored members of Sands Street church organized themselves into the “African Asbury Methodist Church” and erected a small meeting house on High Street between Bridge and Pearl, which remained under the jurisdiction of the Sands Street white preachers until 1820, when the colored members seceded from the church in a body.

From Sands Street Methodism spread rapidly throughout Brooklyn. In 1822 a little society was organized at Yellow Hook which afterwards became the Bay Ridge Methodist Church; in 1823 the York Street Church was formed by Sands Streeters, and in 1826 a class had been established in Red Hook Lane. In 1831 the Washington Street Church and parsonage were erected at a cost of \$24,000—a lavish expenditure in that day. In 1836 Brooklyn Methodism was offered a gift of land near Hanson Place but the gift was declined as being “too far from the settled part of the city.” Today Methodism’s Brooklyn cathedral, Central Methodist Church, occupies approximately the same site. In 1834 there were enough Methodist societies in Williamsburgh for a “Williamsburgh Circuit” to be set up; a “Newtown Circuit” was established in 1841; a “Flushing Circuit” had come into being in 1824. In 1846, by which time a considerable German population was to be found in Brooklyn, and particularly in Williamsburgh, a German-speaking society was organized and on September 21, 1846, the cornerstone of the “German Methodist Episcopal Free Church” was laid at the corner of Stagg and Lorimer Streets. This was the beginning of the old “East German Conference” of the Methodist Church which was merged with the New York East Conference in 1943.

No account of the rise of Methodism on Long Island would be complete without some mention of the Brooklyn Sunday School Union, an organization which flourishes today and brings out thousands of Brooklyn Sunday School children to parade on its “Anniversary Day” early in June.

On the 11th of February, 1816, while the Rev. Nathan Emery was pastor at Sands Street, a Quarterly Conference was held at which



Thomas Sands, a local preacher in the Sands Street Church (later a large shipping merchant and Mayor of Liverpool, England) proposed to establish a Sunday School in Brooklyn. The proposal was adopted, and the children were brought together on the following Sunday in a building known as Thomas Kirk's printing office, a long, narrow-framed edifice on Adams Street between Sands and High. The following were chosen as teachers: Robert Snow (Superintendent), Andrew Mercein, Joseph Herbert, and Daniel DeVinne. This was the first Sunday School on Long Island.

In March of the same year a printed appeal was addressed to "the people of the Village" about the Sunday School. It was, said the appeal, an interdenominational school and the parents could say what catechism was to be taught to their children. After the Sunday School hour the children would be escorted to the church of their choice by the teachers. This appeal was printed in the *Star* and as a result of it a public meeting was called and, on April 8, 1816, the Brooklyn Sunday School Union was officially launched. The meeting place was moved from Kirk's building to the school-house of District No. 1 on the corner of Concord and Adams Streets. There was some opposition to it on the grounds that to have "school" on Sunday was a desecration of the Sabbath, and the project had its ups and downs. In 1821 a new Sunday School building was erected in Prospect Street near Adams, being built with beams and timbers from Mr. Snow's old potash store in New York. As the other denominations developed their own facilities, their children gradually withdrew from the Union, leaving the building to the Methodists, who later erected a Sunday School building of their own on High Street near the parsonage in the rear of the Sands Street Church. But the Sunday School Union continued to function, and still functions today.

Incidentally, one of the most zealous workers in the Sunday School Union in the early days was Mr. Abraham Vanderveer, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, who was to give his name to Vanderveer Park, a residential section of Flatbush.

Meantime, out on the island the going was hard. One of the Long Island circuit-riders complained in his diary:

"The Long Island devil seems to be a different devil from that in other places. A stupid indifference either to religion or to the honors of the world prevails generally. The inhabitants have a pretty good share, however, of the love of money, but too many only want money to get something to drink with."

Quakerism and Calvinism, too, according to the Methodist historian, Dr. N. Bangs, impeded the progress of the true gospel on Long Island.

The Rev. Mitchell Bull, the salty Irishman who rode the circuit in 1806, gives us this interesting record of a trip around his parish:

Sunday, May 10th—Preach at Rockaway, 10:30 A. M.

Preach at Lester Raynor's (Freeport) 3 P. M.

Monday, May 11—Preach at Elijah Chichesters (Amityville)  
2 P. M.

Tuesday, May 12—Preach at William Allaby's (Babylon).

Wednesday, May 13—Preach at Widow Week's.

Thursday, May 14—Rest and visit.

Friday, May 15—Rest and visit.



(From watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis)

*The Methodist Church at Hempstead*

Saturday, May 16—Ride to Coram, to the house of Joseph Roe.

Sunday, May 17—Preach at 10 A. M. and 3 P. M in the meeting-house, Coram.

Monday, May 18—The Manor, preach at the house of Lewis Gordon, 3 P. M.



- Tuesday, May 19—Preach at house of Ezra Tuttle, Patchogue, 3 P. M.
- Wednesday, May 20—Preach at house of Caleb Newton, The Pond (Lake Grove).
- Thursday, May 21—Preach at house of Adam Darling, Smithtown River, 3 P. M.
- Friday, May 22—Preach at house of George Wheeler, Hapauge, 3 P. M.
- Saturday, May 23—Ride to Commack, to Samuel Brush's house.
- Sunday, May 24—Preach at Commack Meeting-house, 10 A. M. Preach at Hapauge Meeting-house, 3 P. M. (Home of Jacob Wheeler).
- Monday, May 25—Preach at William Smith's house, Dix Hills, 3 P. M.
- Tuesday, May 26—Preach at Joseph Higbie's, Cow Harbor, 2 P. M. Preach at Gilbert Scudders, Huntington, 8 P. M.
- Wednesday, May 27—Preach at Carpenter's house, Musketo Cove, 3 P. M.
- Thursday, May 28—Preach at Joseph Starkin's house, Hempstead Harbor, 2 P. M.
- Friday, May 29—Preach at Searington, 2 P. M.
- Saturday, May 30—Ride to Newtown, to Joseph Harpers house.
- Sunday, May 31—Preach at Newtown Meeting-house, 10 A. M. and 3 P. M.
- Monday, June 1—Visit.
- Tuesday, June 2—Ride to Rockaway, to David DeMotts house.
- Wednesday, June 3—Preach at Samuel Osborn's house, Sodom (Baldwin) 3 P. M.
- Thursday, June 4—Preach at Brierly Plains, Moses Beadles, and Parker Baldwin's, alternately.
- Friday, June 5—Preach at Benjamin Nichols, Jerusalem, 2 P. M.
- Saturday, June 6—Ride to Rockaway, to John Laydons or Thomas Burtices.

To minister to such a circuit in our day, even with the assistance of an automobile, would be a herculean feat. In 1806 the Rev. Mr. Bull did it on horseback. Nobody in that day, at least, could complain that the preacher did not earn his money!

In this same year, 1806, the first Methodist camp-meeting on Long Island was held in Kelsey's Woods at Cow Harbor (Northport). The enthusiasm generated at this "protracted meeting" increased Methodist activity throughout the island, and the repercussions were felt even back in Brooklyn, where members of the Sands Street Church, aflame with missionary zeal as a result of the revival, invaded the Brooklyn Navy Yard and made many converts among the sailors, with the result that many "asked that their grog be stopped."

It was out of this meeting, too, that John Darling and "Old Captain" became Christians. Darling, known as "Swearing John"

because of his accomplished cursing, and "Old Captain", a Negro, were two of the most unregenerate men in Smithtown River (Landing) and they went to Kelsey's Woods, as did many others, out of sheer curiosity. At the meeting there was a Praying Ring, in which all attending walked around a circle in single file while the "seekers" knelt in the center of the circle. "Swearing John", in order to have a better view of the show, climbed up a tree, ventured too far out on a weak limb, and fell into the middle of the "seekers". A woman from Smithtown recognized him and began to pray for him in a loud voice, and John was so touched by this that he professed conversion. Thereafter he was known as "Praying John" and became a licensed exhorter.

The details of "Old Captain's" conversion are not so complete, but after it he used to chant "Whole Christian or no Christian" as he chopped wood and thus, we are told, was able to chop three or four cords a day. His Smithtown friends built him a small shanty down near the river, and because it had no floor he used to put down a shingle on which to kneel in prayer. The Rev. Edwin Warriner, historian of the New York East Conference of the Methodist Church, says that he could be heard to pray for a mile. Warriner also tells us that "Old Captain" often went over to Commack to services and says: "They loved to hear 'Old Captain', the Negro Methodist of Smithtown, who used to stuff his old bandana into his mouth to keep from making too much noise when he prayed."

In the early days the Methodists took very seriously John Wesley's injunction against "the wearing of gold and costly apparel", and were pretty straight-laced folk. The Quarterly Conference for the Long Island (Suffolk) Circuit was held at Hauppauge in 1815, and admission was by ticket only, tickets being distributed by the class-leaders to those who were deemed "worthy" of attending. No one was admitted without a ticket and no one could obtain a ticket who "wore rings on their fingers or in their ears" or "flowers on their bonnets".

Around the year 1820 Methodism on Long Island, as elsewhere, was split by the so-called "Stillwellite heresy" which resulted in the establishment of the "Methodist Protestant" Church. The revolt against the authority of the ministers, presiding elders, and bishops began in John Street Church in New York and was not long in spreading to Long Island. One of the places where the dissidents had control was Cow Harbor (Manhasset), where, in 1831, they dismantled the church and moved it to Commack, leaving a handful of "loyalists" to carry on for the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was the first great schism to divide the Methodist Church, the second coming later over the issue of slavery. But in 1939 there was a happy reunion, the Methodist Protestants and the Southern Methodists coming together with the Methodist Episcopal Church to form a united Methodist Church..

It was the good fortune of Brooklyn and Long Island Methodism to be served by some of the denomination's most brilliant and devoted ministers. Freeborn Garrettson, one of the great names in



American Methodism, came north from Maryland in 1787, following his conversion and the freeing of his slaves, to be the associate of the Rev. John Dickins in New York and on Long Island and later, when he was placed in charge of the district which included Long Island, he was the first Methodist to bear the title "Presiding Elder." William Phoebus, who served the Long Island circuit in 1791, was another scholarly Marylander who made a living as a physician when he was not preaching. The Methodist people in Rockaway, commenting on the difference between Phoebus and Benjamin Abbott, his associate



(From watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis)

*Brick Church, East Williston*

on the Long Island circuit, said: "Abbott raises the devil, but Phoebus lays him again". In addition to his preaching and doctoring, Phoebus found time to write an excellent biography of Bishop Thomas Whatcoat and to edit *The Experienced Christian's Magazine*. Benjamin Abbott was a large, hearty man who, according to the records and the number of anecdotes told about him, evidently made more of an impression on the people around the Long Island circuit than any of his colleagues. Once, it is said, he preached on the text "Thou art an austere man", pronouncing the word "austere" as though it were "oyster"—a very appropriate text indeed for the South Shore. When his attention was called to this, he remarked "Never mind that, we raked in seven, didn't we?"

Ezekiel Cooper, who had been converted as a boy in Maryland by hearing Freeborn Garrettson preach to a company of American soldiers in his father's house, was the first Methodist preacher to begin his ministry on Long Island. Of Cooper, who spent 62 of his



84 years in the ministry, the historian Edwin Warriner says: "He was known as a great angler. Like Izaak Walton he carried his fishing tackle with him, and was ever-ready to give a reason for his recreation. Bishop Scott says that his [Cooper's] walking cane was arranged for a fishing rod, and he always had on hand a scripture argument to prove that fishing was an apostolic practice. On one occasion when he returned from an excursion without catching anything, a preacher was much disposed to laugh at his poor success. 'Never mind', said the reverend old angler, 'although I have caught nothing, while watching my line I have finished the outline of one or two sermons'."

Warriner also adds that "Brooklyn never rejoiced in a Methodist pastor of greater talent and popularity." Perhaps Cooper's interest in fishing had as much to do with that as his sermonizing. When he died in 1847 he left a fortune of \$50,000—an unprecedented feat for a Methodist itinerant in that day, and one extremely rare even today!

The Rev. Seymour Landon, a doughty Vermonter who came to Sands Street, Brooklyn, as pastor in 1828 and who thereafter spent almost his entire ministry in Brooklyn and on Long Island (he was Presiding Elder of the Long Island District from 1851 to 1854) was the first of a long line of New York East Conference ministers to preach a "social gospel". And for this he paid a price. Warriner tells us:

"The General Conference of 1836, in its pastoral address, said to the Church: 'We \* \* \* exhort you to abstain from all Abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing any of their publications. \* \* \* We have come to the solemn conviction that the only safe, scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people, to take is wholly to refrain from this agitating subject.'

"The New York Conference passed a resolution forbidding its members acting as agents for *Zion's Watchman* (an Abolitionist magazine). Landon demanded: 'Is the resolution intended to forbid my *taking* the paper myself, and paying for it?' At the following session, when appointments were read, Landon found himself transferred to Sugar Loaf Mountain where, like John the Baptist, he might riot on locusts and wild honey and meditate on the folly of having opinions of his own."

History, however, justified Landon and proved the Bishops mistaken, and when the Abolition movement became respectable in the North he enjoyed a series of excellent appointments, which he doubtless accepted with tongue in cheek.

Laymen, too, played a prominent part in the growth of Methodism on Long Island. The Searings of Searingtown, the Harpers (later to found the great publishing house) in Newtown and Brooklyn, the Raynors of Freeport and eastern Suffolk, the Osborns of Easthampton and Riverhead, the Hawkins family of Ronkonkoma—all wrought as mightily as did the circuit-riding preachers to build the Church.



During the first half of the 19th Century Methodist meeting-houses sprang up all over Long Island—Hauppauge in 1806, Sag Harbor in 1809, Jamaica in 1810, Stony Brook in 1817, Centerport and Bridgehampton in 1820, East Norwich in 1822, Hempstead in 1822, Huntington in 1825, Riverhead in 1830, Norwich in 1835, Brookhaven in 1833, Smithtown Landing in 1834, Good Ground, Orient, Port Jefferson, and Far Rockaway in 1836, Moriches in 1839, Middle Island, Babylon, Amityville and Coram in 1840, Cold Spring in 1842, Setauket and Farmingdale in 1843, West Hills in 1844, Smithtown Branch in 1845. On the western end of the island Flatbush, Yellow Hook, Canarsie, Coney Island, and Astoria were building sites in 1843-1844.

So rapid was the growth of Methodism on Long Island that in 1845, according to Dr. Prime's estimates, only the Dutch Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church had more members in that area than did the Methodists. In that year there were 34 preachers and 6619 full members.

Three years later, in 1848, the New York East Conference was split off from the old New York Conference, and Long Island, including Brooklyn and Queens, became the backbone of the new conference, which also included the southern part of Westchester County and most of Connecticut west of the Connecticut River. Long Island had previously been detached from the New York District of the old New York Conference (in 1840) and from then on until 1864 the "Long Island District" included the whole island. In that year a division was made between north and south, and the whole island from Montauk to Brooklyn was bisected into the somewhat artificial divisions which still hold today.

Exactly 100 years after Dr. Prime estimated that there were 34 Methodist preachers and 6619 Methodist people on Long Island, the records of the New York East Conference showed that, in 1945, there were 141 fully ordained clergymen and 79 local preachers (unordained) serving 56,274 Methodist people and 26,745 Sunday School children. Methodism had made up for its late start and had overcome its early difficulties to overtake all of its denominational rivals with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church.

The injunction of Dr. Prime, as he concludes that basic work on Long Island history on which all other histories of the region are dependent, might well be quoted here not only to "the people called Methodists" but to all the dwellers on old "Nassau Island":

"Inhabitants of Long Island! Remember your high descent, and emulate the example of your pious ancestors."

## CHAPTER XXV

### *The Catholic Church on Long Island*

REVEREND JOHN K. SHARP

THE Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, comprising all of Long Island, was established in 1853. Long before that date, however, Catholics had visited and indeed had settled there. While it is quite possible that Thorfinn Karlsefni, a Catholic Norseman, wintered at Buzzard's Bay and looked upon Long Island about the year 1006, there is no evidence to prove this other than the Scandinavian sagas. Recorded history, however, states that in 1524, probably in mid-April, Giovanni de Verrazano, a Florentine in the service of Francis First of France, sailed his caravel *Dalfina* into the upper Bay of New York and later put a boat ashore at what is now Rockaway and then at Quogue.

The English Catholic, Sir Edmund Plowden, under charter granted in 1624 by Charles First, which read "no persecution to any dissenting", arrived at New Amsterdam in 1642 to claim Plowden's or Long Isle but the Dutch refused to recognize the charter. Nicolaes, the Frenchman from the Brooklyn Wallabout, is the next Catholic name to appear. He was fined in April, 1657, for refusing to support the Dutch Reformed Church, giving the "frivolous excuse that he was a Catholic."

A prominent Catholic of those early days was the Irish-born Sir Thomas Dongan. He was Governor of the Royal Province of New York from 1683 to 1688. Dongan and his party first entered the province at its eastern end, probably at Sag Harbor. They journeyed through Long Island to New York and on the way, in mid-August, 1683, his chaplain, the Jesuit Father Thomas Harvey, probably offered the first Mass on Long Island. Dongan, a general favorite with all historians, is famous for calling the first Representative General Assembly of New York, held October 17, 1683. He spent part of his time on a manor presented to him by the towns of Hempstead and Flushing just south of Lake Success. With the fall of the House of Stuart, Dongan went into retirement and left New York in 1691.

Beginning that year, 1691, a succession of anti-Catholic laws, culminating a decade later in a decree providing the death penalty for priests and heavy punishments for those who sheltered them, outlawed the external practices of Catholicism from the Province of New York. Despite this, the names of Catholic colonists have survived from the seventeenth century and may be found in increasing numbers through the eighteenth, in such sources as town and court records, tax rates, militia rolls, censuses, private diaries, ledgers and journals, early newspapers, tombstones, etc. French and Spanish prisoners of war, including Father Peter de Mareuil, S.J., who was held at Flatbush from 1709 to 1711, were quartered in Brooklyn and



on Long Island during the eighteenth century. Two groups of the Acadians who had been deported from Nova Scotia because of anti-Catholic laws also came here. The second group to arrive had been exiled to Georgia and South Carolina. Unwanted there, they were allowed to depart in frail craft. They arrived at a Long Island cove on August 22, 1756, only to be captured and transported upstate. The first group to come was brought to New York as prisoners on April 28, 1756, and 109 of them were distributed through the Long Island towns of Flatbush, Bushwick, Newtown, Flushing, Jamaica, Hempstead, Oyster Bay, Smithtown, Huntington, Brookhaven, Southold, East Hampton and Southampton. They are referred to in the official proceedings of the Provincial Assembly, in private journals and in various church and town records until 1764, at which date they were probably deported.

The War of Independence inscribed many Catholic names on the rolls of the local Continental militia and a number of Catholics were reported among the German mercenaries in the English forces quartered on Long Island. One of the first celebrations of St. Patrick's Day in America took place in 1779 at Jamaica where the Volunteers of Ireland were encamped.

After the war, freedom of religion was legalized by the Constitution and the trickle of Irish Catholic immigrants grew larger until by 1800 a couple of hundred had settled about the Wallabout, the site of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The father of Brooklyn-born John McCloskey, who later became America's first Cardinal, was praised for supervising the labors of some twelve hundred Irishmen who prepared defensive fortifications on Brooklyn Heights against the expected British attack in August, 1814. By then the infant *Brooklyn Star* and, farther east, the *Sag Harbor Corrector* were printing increasingly frequent references to Catholic names. At this time St. Peter's Church, Barclay Street, New York, which had been openly organized immediately after the Revolution and, after 1809, St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mott Street, were the churches to which the Brooklyn Catholics ferried for Sunday Mass.

Then priests began coming from New York to celebrate Mass in Brooklyn. Such a one, Father Phillip Lariscey, an Irish Augustinian, celebrated the first known Mass in 1821 in William Purcell's house which is still standing at the northeast corner of York and Gold Streets. On January 1, 1822, Peter Turner, a prominent Catholic layman, circularized the Catholics of Brooklyn Village, who then numbered possibly eight hundred persons or one-tenth of its population, and he organized the first Catholic congregation on Long Island. Sunday Mass was offered thereafter with some regularity by priests from New York, especially by Doctor John Power, V.G., and in places such as Dempsey's Blooming Grove Garden on lower Fulton Street, since removed for the Brooklyn Bridge approach.

A plot of ground on the corner of Jay and Chapel Streets was purchased March 1, 1822, by the Roman Catholic Society of the Village of Brooklyn. It was blessed for cemetery and church purposes April 25, 1822, and next year, on August 28th, St. James', the first



Catholic church on Long Island and the sixth in the State, was blessed by Bishop Connolly, the second Bishop of New York. A church basement school was opened that September. In 1825 the first resident pastor, Reverend John Farnan, was appointed. The beginnings of Catholic charitable endeavor are discerned in the formation by a group of laymen in 1829 of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society. Some Sisters of Charity came from Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1831 to live on lower Fulton Street, where they conducted an academy and taught at St. James' School. An orphan asylum and a convent for the sisters was erected on the west side of Jay Street and in 1833 the sisters moved in. In 1838 the orphanage was transferred to St. Paul's Parish where a new building had been erected.

Catholic growth was slow at first and during the 1830s, '40s and '50s, there was much open antagonism to the newcomers. By 1840, however, it was quite apparent that the Church had come to stay on the Island first seen by European Catholics over three centuries before. Heavy tides of immigration set in, beginning 1846, and the Catholic population and the number of churches and schools increased. Large numbers of Catholics were taking honorable and useful parts in building up the growing City of Brooklyn and, in smaller measure, the hamlets in Kings, Queens and Suffolk Counties. In Suffolk County, in remote Sag Harbor, a Catholic congregation had a church as early as 1838. Among the pioneers of those early days the names of the Parmentiers, of Cornelius Heeney and Father John Walsh, pastor of St. James', 1829-1841, deserve mention.

In this pre-diocesan period the seeds of most of today's great diocesan, educational and charitable enterprises had taken firm root. Relatively poor themselves, the Catholic congregations were also contributing to Irish relief during the dreadful famine years and to various other religious and humanitarian projects abroad and in the United States. They were enjoying a social and cultural life of their own, supporting Catholic newspapers and patronizing a growing number of Catholic men of letters. Parish libraries were active and went hand in hand with the efforts of the Sunday schools to instruct children attending the public schools. Sick and death benefit societies had been formed and the accounts of contemporary first Communion and Confirmation days, school commencements and cornerstone layings read much like today's. Parish societies were flourishing and some important people were entering the Church as converts. Temperance societies, first started at St. Mary's, Williamsburgh, in 1840, were strengthened by the visit to Brooklyn in 1849 of the famous apostle of temperance, Father Theobald Mathew.

Since public authority had been unable to secure suitable religious instruction for the children of the various denominations in the tax-supported public schools and Bishop Hughes was refused public moneys for free parish schools, Catholics were forced to build their own school system and at the same time to contribute taxes for the support of public schools for non-Catholic children. Unfortunately, since then, the public schools have grown increasingly secular, religion has been divorced from education—which is pedagogically unsound



and contrary to early American tradition—and generations have grown up without vital moral and religious instruction.

There was a small number of excellent private Catholic lay-conducted schools but these did not suffice. Gradually more Sisters



*Old St. James Church, Brooklyn*

of Charity came, the Christian Brothers entered Brooklyn in 1851 and the Sisters of St. Dominic in 1853, to lay the foundations of our parish elementary school system and to open their academies for secondary education. One such academy had already been conducted at Ravenswood (now part of Long Island City), 1844-1847, by the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

Early societies, some of which function today, and the dates of their foundation, were the Erin Fraternal Benevolent Association, 1823; the Emerald Benevolent Association, which has held an annual ball since 1839; the Shamrock Benevolent Society, 1841, and the Emmet Benevolent Society, 1845. In addition to the orphan support derived from these societies, Cornelius Heeney organized in 1845 the presently existing Brooklyn Benevolent Society to administer his estate for the poor "without distinction" of creed. A modicum of orphan support also came from public funds.

The growth of the Church necessitated opening another cemetery and, in 1849, after some local opposition, Holy Cross Cemetery began to function in Flatbush. Almost all the early parish churches also had their small adjoining "God's Acre."

In 1853 the following Kings County churches had resident pastors: St. James, St. Paul, Assumption, Holy Cross, St. Patrick's on Kent Avenue, St. John the Evangelist, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis in the Field, St. Joseph, St. Benedict, SS. Peter and Paul and Holy Trinity. Queens County had resident pastors at St. Michael, Flushing, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Astoria, and St. Monica, Jamaica. There were also eighteen missions scattered through the present four counties. Of the twenty-five clergymen serving the Catholic congregations at the end of 1853, eighteen were born in Ireland, four were of Germanic origin, two were American born and one was Portuguese. Nevertheless, sixty per cent had received their proximate priestly education and training in American seminaries. There were fourteen sisters and brothers and an undetermined number of lay teachers instructing some 2500 children in a dozen parish schools and academies. The Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of St. Dominic were also caring for some 150 orphans. Extant records reveal the fact that during 1853 some 4512 baptisms were administered and some 1838 Brooklyn and Long Island Catholics received Catholic burial. All told, the Brooklyn and Long Island Catholic population may be conservatively estimated to have been then about 50,000 in a general population of about 200,000.

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So numerous had the Catholics become that Pope Pius IX erected the Diocese of Brooklyn on June 29, 1853, and he selected Very Reverend John Loughlin, V.G., to be the first Bishop. Bishop Loughlin was born at Drumboniff, Ireland, in 1817 and in 1829 left with his parents for America. The family settled in Albany where the future Bishop attended the famous Dr. Peter Bullion's Albany Academy. He studied at St. Peter's College, Chambly, Canada, and attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland, until 1839. He spent his last year at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore. He was ordained at old St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, 1840, and was consecrated Bishop of Brooklyn on October 30, 1853. He found the Church as described above in a growing metropolis that was neighbor to New York and gateway for the New World immigrants.



During his long administration of thirty-eight years, his diocese continued growing from the advent of Catholic Europeans whom he helped adjust to the great melting pot of America. When he died in 1891 his flock numbered over 300,000 in a total Long Island population of slightly over one million. To meet the needs of his people he built churches, founding 98 parishes or missions that became parishes. He left 99 English-speaking churches, twenty-three German, three Italian, two Polish and one each of French, Lithuanian, Bohemian and Scandinavian. To assist him he introduced congregations of religious priests—the Vincentian Fathers, the Fathers of Mercy and the Pallottine Fathers. He recruited his diocesan priesthood from abroad and at home. Until his last days, when St. John's Seminary opened, his



*St. Joseph's in the Pines at Brentwood, as It Looked about  
Fifty Years Ago*

clergy were educated and trained outside the diocese. It is worthy of note that Father Raffener, patriarch of the Germans, had conducted a preparatory seminary from 1856 to 1858. There were eighteen religious and 184 diocesan priests serving in 1891. Of the latter fifty-five per cent had studied theology in the United States, thirteen per cent in Ireland and the rest on the Continent. Forty-four per cent were born in the United States, thirty per cent in Ireland and the others elsewhere in Europe.

The expansion of the Catholic school system quickly followed the multiplication of parishes. To this end Bishop Loughlin invited into the diocese the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of the Visitation, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, the Sisters of Christian Charity, the Franciscan Brothers and the Vincentian Fathers. These religious engaged in primary and secondary education, while the Vincentians and the Franciscans gave us our first two Catholic colleges in 1870 and 1876, respectively.

It was a struggle to support these schools, but if the equipment was not always as good as in the public schools with their almost limitless resources, the results were excellent. By the end of the period there were sixty ecclesiastical students at St. John's Seminary and nearly as many studying elsewhere, there were 465 students in our two colleges and about 32,000 children in 66 parish elementary

schools and twenty academies. The latter schools were taught by the great majority of the 944 religious personnel then in the diocese and by several hundred lay teachers. The rest of the sisters were staffing the hospitals and houses of charity that the Bishop had organized.

If it is difficult to summarize the educational achievements during this period, it is equally hard to present briefly the story of the problems of relief and how they were met. Here, also, there was opposition on the part of some to freedom of worship for inmates of state and county institutions of correction and social welfare. Then, too, allotments from the public treasury for the many public cases



*Academy of Saint Joseph-in-the-Pines, Brentwood*

in Catholic orphanages and hospitals were never more than a fraction of the cost of their maintenance, not to speak of capital expenses.

The Bishop's formation of the St. Vincent de Paul Society proved a great blessing. Another was the erection and maintenance of orphanages conducted briefly by the Franciscan Brothers and then by the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Charity, the Sisters of Mercy and the Dominican Sisters. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd reformed wayward girls. St. Vincent's Home for newsboys and St. John's Protectory, Hicksville, sheltered and trained boys. The Little Sisters of the Poor took care of the indigent aged, and the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary conducted St. Joseph's Institute for deaf children. All told there were twenty-two protective institutions and asylums for children and youth, caring for nearly 5000 inmates in 1891. There were three homes for working women and five Catholic hospitals, the latter in 1891 caring for 4307 bed patients, apart from patients treated in their clinics and dispensaries.

The Know Nothing troubles of 1854-55 were serious threats in Brooklyn, but were not so tragic as elsewhere in the country. However, these and other local and open manifestations of hostility



largely subsided after Catholic Germans and Irish, especially in the Fourteenth and other Brooklyn regiments, died to save the Union in the Civil War.

Bishop Loughlin sponsored and approved many forms of Catholic life including Brooklyn's first two Catholic newspapers, the *Brooklyn Catholic*, 1869-70, and the *Catholic Review*, 1872-1899. The Bishop did his utmost to prosper the welfare of the community although he rarely appeared in newspaper notices. That the hierarchy highly regarded him is evident in the fact that he was thrice proposed by them as Archbishop of New York. He laid the cornerstone of what was planned as a great Brooklyn cathedral, but soon he halted construction and directed his attention to the maintenance of the diocesan orphanages and the erection of a seminary. He lived as simply and humbly as any of his priests. The golden jubilee of his priesthood in 1890, the year before his death, was a notable celebration. If Brooklyn has been known for decades as the city of churches, John Loughlin had no small responsibility in it.

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Like his predecessor, our second Bishop came from an important position in the Archdiocese of New York. Very Reverend Monsignor Charles Edward McDonnell, who was born in New York City and served as secretary to Archbishop Corrigan, was consecrated Bishop of Brooklyn on April 25, 1892, at the height of the staid Victorian era. Bishop McDonnell was a deep thinker and keen observer. He was humble and austere in his personal life and like his predecessor rarely appeared at civic gatherings, although he contributed in many ways to the progress of the community.

The social changes occurring during the twenty-nine years of his episcopate were possibly greater than in any comparable period of history. The nation grew faster than ever before. Of the 31,350,000 immigrants who arrived here between 1821 and 1915, 12,000,000 came after 1901, the great majority now from central, southern and south-eastern Europe. The Catholic Church contributed to American unity and stability by opposing the pan-Germanism of Cahensly. Despite the opposition of the so-called "American Protective Association" and the "Guardians of Liberty", she took her rightful place in American life and gave heroic service in the First World War. By the year 1921 through the growth of Kings and especially Queens County nearly 3,000,000 people lived on Long Island, of whom about 850,000 were Catholics.

Bishop McDonnell revitalized clerical life, held the third, fourth and fifth diocesan synods and in 1909 consecrated the first Auxiliary Bishop, George W. Mundelein, later the first Cardinal of Chicago. Bishop McDonnell built Cathedral College, the preparatory seminary in 1914, and when he died in 1921 he left 122 religious and 496 diocesan priests. Over sixty-eight per cent of the latter were born in the United States, fifteen per cent in Ireland and the rest in other foreign lands. About sixty-eight per cent of these clergymen were educated and trained in America and seven per cent in Ireland. To

minister more adequately to the congregations of diverse nationalities Bishop McDonnell secured priests well versed in foreign languages and he invited twelve religious congregations of priests to the diocese.

In keeping with the increased rate of immigration after 1901, he established a greater number of parishes in twenty-nine years than Bishop Loughlin had founded in thirty-eight years. In his reign there were established 118 parishes of which seventeen were for Italian-speaking congregations, fifteen Polish, ten German, four Lithuanian and one each for the Spanish people and for those of the Greek Ruthenian, Maronite and Greek Melchite Rites. He left 272 parishes and missions behind him.

Bishop McDonnell intensified parish spiritual life and he appointed diocesan directors to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Catholic school system and to the diocesan cemeteries and charities. In 1908 he established the *Brooklyn Tablet*, the diocesan newspaper which has a weekly circulation today of about 130,000.

The Catholic school system developed greatly during the period. To the eleven teaching communities functioning here in 1892 he added eleven more. He opened two new colleges—one briefly conducted by the Jesuits and the other by the Sisters of St. Joseph, making a total of four. He established fifty-eight more parish elementary schools, making a total of 124 with a registration of about 75,000, and he saw about two dozen academies and high schools opened.

Catholic charitable endeavor was needed during his administration as never before. Increased immigration of generally poor people, growing industrialization of society, recurring business depressions and strikes, and city slums complicated the problem. Although social welfare began to loom larger in civic consciousness, the majority of sick, destitute and unemployed still had to rely upon private charities for relief.

To the problems of finance were added antagonisms from the shallow philosophy of those social reformers who saw in men only bodies without religious dignity or spiritual destiny. The Bishop organized the diocesan Bureau of Charities and a Charities Commission to deal more adequately with the problems of social welfare and he introduced four more religious communities devoted to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. New hospitals, protective asylums and homes were built and the St. Vincent de Paul Society and other old and new volunteer lay organizations flourished. At the end of the period there were fourteen protective institutions for children and youth with a population of 5114, seven homes for adults housing hundreds, and ten hospitals whose bed patients in 1921 numbered 20,954, in addition to those treated in clinics and dispensaries.

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Before he died on August 8, 1921, Bishop McDonnell had received from the Holy Father an Auxiliary Bishop in the person of Reverend Doctor Thomas E. Molloy. Born in New Hampshire, the present ordinary was ordained in 1908 for the Diocese of Brooklyn and he served as a curate at Queens of All Saints Parish, Brooklyn, and as





*Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington*



secretary to Bishop Mundelein. He was consecrated October 3, 1920, and was named the third Bishop of Brooklyn on November 21, 1921.

His regime witnessed the Klu Klux Klan outrages of the middle 1920s, the false prosperity of those years, the depression of the next decade, the rise of totalitarianism abroad and its menace to the American way of life, and our own involvement in the Second World War. During that tragedy America, by its war effort, rose to stand at the summit of the world's material greatness, and Catholic residents of Brooklyn and Long Island contributed their full share. In 1946 they numbered well over one million souls.

Bishop Molloy organized the Diocesan Building Commission, the Diocesan Purchasing Bureau and Parish Service Corporation. He built the new Chancery at 75 Greene Avenue, Brooklyn, in 1930, enlarged it in 1938 and in 1945 moved many of the diocesan commissions, especially Catholic Charities, to the diocesan building at 191 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn—so vast had been the growth of the diocesan administrative requirements.

For thirteen years Bishop Molloy had directed the diocese alone when he petitioned the Holy See for a coadjutor and, in 1935, he had the pleasure of consecrating Most Reverend Raymond A. Kearney as Brooklyn's third Auxiliary Bishop.

Bishop Molloy evinced great interest in vocations to the priesthood and in the education and training of the clergy. Cathedral College expanded and in 1926 a new diocesan major seminary was started at Lloyd Harbor Village. There, in 1930, he opened the present beautiful Seminary of the Immaculate Conception staffed by diocesan priests.

The summaries of the birthplaces of our diocesan clergy serving in 1946 and of the theological seminaries where they were trained are revealing. Of the 1026 diocesan clergy, over sixty-three per cent were born in the diocese and twenty-two per cent elsewhere in America. Over eighty-three per cent were trained in the United States and less than three per cent in Ireland. There are today fifteen communities of religious priests in the diocese with a personnel of 203. Four Brooklyn priests died as chaplains in the service of their country during World War II.

Bishop Molloy had also to provide more churches for his growing flock. Despite the stoppage of immigration the Catholic population continued growing from natural increase and from the advent of faithful from other dioceses. The spread of industrial areas and civic improvements, such as slum clearance and new highways and the trend of population eastward to Queens and Nassau, also created problems. During the period eight new parishes were established in Kings County, thirty-five in Queens, thirteen in Nassau and two in Suffolk, until the diocese in 1946 had 296 parishes and 34 missions.

Religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods have continued to grow both in number of communities and in personnel. There were in 1946, in the diocese, 306 brothers in six communities and 4758 sisters in forty-five communities. The teaching sisters and brothers have made possible our splendid school system which currently embraces a uni-



versity with a pre-war enrollment of 9000, three colleges, forty-eight high schools with nearly 20,000 pupils, and 213 elementary schools with over 125,000 pupils. Intensified teacher training and the development of St. John's University have been outstanding characteristics of the period. As a result our schools meet the Regents examinations of the State of New York with ease, and, during 1939, for example, saved the public treasury over \$100,000 daily in maintenance costs. The saving today is considerably greater.

The after-results of two wars and the intervening long depression years placed great strain upon private relief agencies, but the Church continued to strive for the well-being of the individual, the integrity of the family and the supremacy of morality over merely utilitarian considerations. Her spiritual and temporal works of mercy provided not only food, shelter, medicine and guidance, but gave moral encouragement and spiritual strength that government grants and mechanized agencies can never hope to provide.

Bishop Molloy thoroughly reorganized the Diocesan Bureau of Charities with its divisions of family welfare, protective care, children, social group work, health and social action. The St. Vincent de Paul Society enlarged its sphere of usefulness. A partial report for the year 1945 indicated that the diocese possessed seventeen protective institutes for children and youth with a population of 2615, besides 1786 receiving supervised foster care; our twelve hospitals cared for 45,366 bed patients for several hundred thousand days, apart from clinic and dispensary patients; there were three homes for the aged with 589 inmates and four shelters for working people. The annual diocesan charities budget ran well over ten million dollars.

The world-wide economic dislocation of the 1930s and 1940s has prevented the foundation of many new parishes and the construction of more churches and schools. The Catholic life of the diocese has, however, become more vigorous. This is evident especially in the development of the retreat movement for men and women and by guilds to spiritualize professional and other groups. The support that Brooklyn Catholics give to world-wide charities is still famous. The diocesan cemeteries are among the most beautiful in the country. At the center of all this activity for the honor and glory of God and for the spiritual and temporal welfare of mankind is Bishop Molloy. One with him are his devoted and generous people and his faithful religious and priests.

As the ugly and anti-American manifestations of the resurgent Ku Klux Klan again appeared in 1946, it was gratifying to note that the legislatures of the more advanced States prepared to outlaw that organization. In this connection the recent words of Everett R. Clinchy (*New York Times*, July 10, 1946), are worth summarizing. This Protestant president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews stated that every Catholic believes the immortal truths of our Declaration of Independence, which is the life-blood of democracy; that Catholics stand for civil liberty; that they shed their blood in defense of America in greater proportion to their numbers than others; that they have given complete national allegiance to the United

States Government and spiritual loyalty to their Church and Pope, its visible earthly head.

In much of the same spirit after the anti-Catholic manifestations of the 1928 presidential campaign Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, wrote to the *New York Sun*, October 18, 1928, "This Church, quite alien to most of us, has taught us a lesson in manners and morals". At that time also an editorial writer in the *New York Times*, November 3, 1928, wrote, "Catholics . . . who under great stress when reviled, revile not, again illustrate the most excellent way—the Christian way."

Catholics today are content to continue to try to merit such praise from their non-Catholic fellow Americans.





## CHAPTER XXVI

### *The Lutheran Church on Long Island*

ROBERT W. BROCKWAY

**B**ECAUSE most American Lutherans are of recent European derivation, we are inclined to think the Lutheran Church a little alien. Historically speaking, however, nothing could be further from the truth for its American roots go back to the earliest days of the oldest colonies.

There were Lutherans in the abortive little colony of St. Augustine in Florida which the Huguenots founded in 1565; Lutherans in the crew of the *Half Moon* held services on Hudson's Bay in 1619, and there were Lutherans among the first settlers of New Amsterdam in 1623, three years after the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. One of these early settlers was a Lutheran Dane by the name of Bronck whose farm was on that section of the mainland since named for him—the Bronx.

Some 2000 Swedes and Finns, Lutherans all, settled along the Delaware in 1638 when Sweden attempted to begin a colony in America. Two Lutheran churches (Old Swedes' Church at Wilmington and Gloria Dei in Philadelphia) were built by the Scandinavian colonists. They were served by two pastors, R. Torkillus and J. Campanius, who were the first Lutheran ministers in America. A few years later, when the Dutch suddenly swooped down on the little colony and annexed it to New Netherland, the Lutheran ministers were sent home. Swedish immigration stopped and the two Lutheran churches were later taken over by Episcopalians.

Mention of the Lutherans in New Netherland appears in the reports which the governor sent to the Directors of the Dutch West India Company and also in the journal of Isaac Jogues, a French Jesuit who visited New Amsterdam in 1643. No mention is made of Lutherans on Long Island but it is inconceivable to believe that there were not Lutherans in the little Dutch villages like Flatbush and New Utrecht.

Although Holland itself was tolerant of differing religious views, the Dutch West India Company, in whose charge was New Netherland, insisted upon strict conformity to the Dutch Reformed Church. The reasons were political rather than religious since religious convictions and political loyalties were in the 17th Century almost inseparable. The chronically insecure position of New Netherland with its hostile British neighbors and heterogeneous population made loyalty to all things Dutch a necessary aspect of colonial policy.

This policy was a serious disadvantage to the Lutheran colonists. Not only were they deprived of the benefit of Lutheran worship, but the baptism of the children and religious education were in the hands of the Reformed ministers. Governor Stuyvesant, however, was forced to adopt a mild attitude toward Lutheran dissenters in the



community because of the many prominent merchants among them. Repeated appeals on the part of the Lutherans for a minister of their own faith went unanswered for many years, but Stuyvesant winked at the furtive services held in private homes.

In 1657, the Consistory of Amsterdam sent Rev. John Goetwasser to New Netherland in response to the appeals from there. A cry of protest went up from the spiritual despots of the colony, Dominis Drisius and Megapolensis, joint heads of the Reformed Church in New Netherland. The new pastor was forbidden to conduct services and was later deported. Another attempt, in 1662, to bring a Lutheran pastor to New Netherland also ended in deportation.

Then one morning in 1673, New York awoke to find the harbor full of Dutch warships. The colony surrendered without a shot and the Dutch flag was hoisted over the fort again. Governor Colve, concerned with the defense of the newly reconquered colony, had a wall built which crossed lower Manhattan diagonally and left the little Lutheran church outside the wall. Colve ordered it demolished and a second meeting house was subsequently erected within the wall. For a long time it was the largest church in New York, and its steeple with a rooster weather vane on top, appears conspicuously on prints of old New York.

After nine months of occupation the Dutch by treaty relinquished New York and British administration returned. The Lutherans who now had a pastor continued to worship in their new church. The Amsterdam consistory, refusing to take further responsibility for the New York Lutherans, left them on their own and when the pastor, Bernard Arensius, died in 1695, the congregation was obliged to accept supplies until Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran minister to be ordained in America took the parish in 1703. It was a very large parish for it stretched from Long Island to Albany and included parts of New Jersey. Rev. Falckner had to serve it alone.

The Lutheran Church in the 18th Century was beset with many problems. For one thing there was the language difficulty. The earliest Lutherans were Dutch but subsequent immigrants were German. Thus while the Dutch flag was still flying over Fort Amsterdam, German was the official language of the Lutheran community. After British occupation, however, the Dutch feeling pressed by an alien culture and government intensified their Hollandishness and also their numbers. By 1700, Dutch was again the language of the Lutheran community. This continued until more Germans arrived. Friction arose between the Dutch who controlled the congregation and the large German minority. Each wanted the services to be in their own language. Conciliation failed and so in 1750 the Germans pulled out of the Trinity Church and built the German Christ Church on Cliff Street. Both churches, however, remained united in polity. Toward the close of the century when new generations who did not know either Dutch or German had grown up, demands were made for English services. English services, hymn books and catechisms were provided. An English-language church (Zion) was founded in 1797 but became Episcopalian ten years later. The spacious St. Matthew's church, built in 1821, began as an English-language church. A decade

or so later, however, an influx of German immigrants turned the trend back to German.

Another vexing problem of the early 18th Century was organization. The Lutheran churches in America, if they had synodical connections at all, were tied to the churches of the countries from which the immigrants came. In 1735, Rev. William Berkenmeyer, of New York, and a few other pastors attempted to found a Lutheran Federation of Churches along the Hudson. Only one meeting of this organization was ever held although the federation continued theoretically to exist until 1775.

The first successful movement toward larger unity was brought about by Rev. Henry M. Muhlenberg who organized the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1748. This was an association of pastors who met periodically for purposes of better interchurch coordination and to provide for the appointment of ministers. The New York pastors joined this organization.

In 1786, the same New York pastors banded together to form the New York Ministerium under the auspices of Rev. John C. Kunze, the son-in-law of Muhlenberg. The new synod which began at Albany with two laymen and three ministers grew slowly. Doctrinal differences between it and the descendants of the Berkenmeyer group prevented rapid development as well as the diversion of most of the German immigrants to Pennsylvania.

Three principal currents of theological opinion are discernible toward the close of the 18th Century in the New York area. The majority of ministers, including Kunze and Muhlenberg, were of the Pietist School. This movement began in Germany around 1675, and spread to other parts of the continent and to England where it influenced the growth of Methodism. Pietists insisted upon spontaneous subjective religious experience and minimized the importance of doctrinal adherents.

This school brought a cry of protest from orthodox Lutherans who insisted upon intellectual assent to the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion as interpreted by Luther. Rev. Berkenmeyer led this group in the New York colony.

A small but influential school of Rationalists grew out of the Pietist movement. These were led by Rev. F. H. Quitman, who succeeded Kunze as head of the Ministerium in 1804. His catechism, published in 1812, constituted an appeal to reason rather than scriptural authority in religious matters.

The conflict between these three philosophies of religion not only in the colony of New York but in all the seaboard colonies resulted in the triumph of orthodoxy in the early 19th Century. As an aspect of this triumph came the formation of the General Synod in 1820. This was a body comprising the synods which had developed up and down the Atlantic seaboard. The expressed purpose of the synod was to combat unorthodox theology and also to prevent too close cooperation between Lutherans and other denominations. Movements in the direction of interdenominational merging began in the latter part of the 18th Century. In New York negotiations were in progress for union with the Episcopal Church. In Pennsylvania



the Presbyterian Church was being approached while in the South it was also with the Episcopalians. The formation of the General Synod at Hagerstown, Maryland, proved an effective counterbalance to these tendencies. The New York Ministerium joined the synod in 1837.

In 1840, there were four Lutheran Churches in New York City. St. Matthew's on Walker Street was the largest and was heir to the Trinity Church sold to the Episcopalians in 1805. Preaching after long disputes was by then done exclusively in German. In theology the pastor and congregation were mildly conservative. St. James on Orange Street was English-language. It was founded in 1826. The traditional all-German church was the Christ Church which moved in 1831 from Cliff Street to Walker Street. The fourth church did not belong to the New York Ministerium. It was founded by a group of ten immigrant families, part of a larger group of Prussians who had left Germany because of the church reforms of King Frederick William III. A church organization known as the Buffalo Synod developed from this group. They were ultra-conservative in theology and favored hierarchical church government. They disapproved intensely of the other Lutheran churches in America whom they felt had departed from true Lutheranism.

In 1843, this church joined the Missouri Synod. Founded in 1838, by Rev. Carl F. Walther, who led a group of some six hundred immigrants from Saxony to St. Louis, the Missouri Synod represents the most conservative wing of the Lutheran Church. Conscious of Lutheran peculiarity, the Missouri Synod opposed the inter-denominational fraternalism of other synods. It held to a strictly orthodox interpretation of theology and zealously opposed those who differed from it.

It was during these years that Lutheranism first made its appearance on Long Island in the way of organized churches. Hitherto it was necessary for Brooklyn and Queens Lutherans to go by ferry to New York in order to attend divine services. In 1841, however, St. John's on Schermerhorn Street, in Brooklyn, was organized. For several years the congregation met in private homes. But in 1844, a meeting house was built. The church was fortunate in acquiring as its pastor Rev. Hiram Garliche, a man of great ability both as pastor and writer. Under his ministry the church school grew to such an extent that there were two hundred pupils in attendance. Articles published by him in theological journals added greatly to the prestige of the church. In due time the church joined the Missouri Synod.

St. John's Church, on Graham Avenue, in Brooklyn, was founded in 1843. Others followed, St. John's, on New Jersey Avenue, in 1847, St. Paul's, on South 5th Street, in 1853, and Zion Church, on Henry Street, in 1855. The pastor of this latter, Rev. W. F. Steimle, headed in 1866 a group of pastors who protested against confessional heterodoxy on the part of the Ministerium of New York. He was particularly opposed to secret societies. He succeeded in bringing about the withdrawal of several of the churches both in Brooklyn and New York from the New York Ministerium. An organization

called the Steimle Synod was headed by him until it disbanded in 1872.

Another split in the New York Ministerium came in 1867. Most of the English-speaking members preferred a milder confession to that adhered to by the German members. They left the Ministerium and formed the Synod of New York. Later they united with the General Synod.

All of the churches so far mentioned were of German congregations. In most of them the German language was used exclusively. They were for the most part founded by interested groups of people who disliked having to commute to New York to go to church. An example of this is St. Luke's on Washington Avenue. A number of Brooklyn Heights members of St. Matthew's Church in New York were urged by their pastor to form a church of their own. Because of their sentimental attachment to the pastor, Rev. C. F. Stohlman, they declined. After his death in 1868, however, they began laying plans and collecting funds for a church. A small congregation was collected for Pentecost in 1869 in a lecture room on Cumberland Street by Rev. J. H. Braden. Regular services were held thereafter. The next year, the congregation purchased Simpson Methodist Church. The church was united with the New York Ministerium and ultimately with the United Lutheran Church of America when that body was founded in 1918.

This example is typical of the early Lutheran churches on Long Island. Churches developed rapidly in Brooklyn. Immigrants were coming from Germany in ever increasing numbers and between 1860 and 1868 no fewer than six Lutheran churches were consecrated.

The spread of Lutheranism in Queens was somewhat slower. The first church to be organized there was St. John's at College Point in 1857. Originally a church of the Missouri Synod it later became a member of the Ministerium and ultimately of the United Lutheran Church. St. James' on Winfield Street was founded ten years later and is of the Missouri Synod. These were the only two churches in Queens, the present borough, up to 1870. Between 1870 and 1900, four more were organized.

The great influx of Germans of the 70s and 80s and from then on until the outbreak of the First World War caused a proportionate increase in the number of Lutheran churches.

As the city grew eastward more settlers came in need of local church homes. Some churches were organized by home missionaries and others by laymen who organized congregations on their own initiative. Some of the Germans bought farms further out on Long Island. As early as 1850, there was a considerable settlement of them around Hicksville.

In that year a number of Lutherans formed a Lutheran church for themselves which met for several years in the home of one of its founders. This is the oldest Lutheran Church in Nassau County. The first pastor was Rev. August Weisel who was either pastor or son of the pastor of St. John's on Maujer Street in Brooklyn. From the beginning, the Hicksville church, Trinity, was of the Missouri Synod. In 1863, at the beginning of Rev. Weisel's pastorate, the



congregation met in Union Chapel which is now a part of the Methodist Church. During the same year a frame church was built which served the congregation until 1931 when it was replaced by a large stone English Gothic church with stained glass windows. The services were bilingual until 1941.

The oldest church in Suffolk County is St. John's of Lindenhurst which was founded in 1876. Lindenhurst, the original name of which was Breslau, began in 1870 as a German settlement. Early the following year steps were taken to organize a Protestant Church which went under the name of Free German Christian Congregation. Later the following year the church was named St. John's. Being unaffiliated with any larger body, the church united with the Reformed Church in 1872 and received a Reformed pastor, Rev. A. Stoll. The little church fared badly for the next four years. In fact so uncertain were the services that the church bell had to be rung on Saturday nights to notify the people that there would be a service the next morning.

At last in 1876, Pastor George Drees took the congregation and on the first day of his acceptance held a meeting of the congregation at which the decision was made to withdraw from the Reformed Church and unite with the New York Ministerium. St. John's history as a Lutheran Church really begins from this year. Four years later it again changed its synodical attachments and joined the Missouri Synod to which it has remained connected ever since.

In 1879, St. Peter's church was founded at Greenport in Southold Town. It became associated with the Ministerium. Between this date and the end of the century Nassau County added only two Lutheran Churches (including Hempstead Epiphany in 1897), while Suffolk County gained none.

Up to this point we have discussed only the German Lutheran churches. There are also churches, however, of Scandinavian congregations. Few Scandinavians lived around New York before 1870. In that year there were some three thousand Swedes in the metropolitan area. Most of the immigrants from Norway and Sweden went West to the rich farm land. It was only when urban factory workers began migrating around 1883 that the East gained any appreciable Scandinavian population.

As early as 1865, however, the Augustana Synod (an organization begun a few years before in Illinois by Swedes), sent a missionary to found a Swedish church in New York. Among the original congregation was John Ericsson, inventor of the *Monitor*. As the years passed other Swedish churches appeared in Brooklyn and Queens. A home for the aged and an orphan home in Brooklyn mark Swedish concern for social welfare. An educational institution, Upsala Academy, was begun in 1893 in Brooklyn. There are three Augustana churches in Nassau and Suffolk Counties: Gloria Dei at Huntington Station which was founded in 1932, Christ Church at New Hyde Park, and St. Andrew's at Garden City South.

The first Norwegian church in New York was founded only a year after the Swedish in the same city. Some time later, churches like the Church of Our Saviour on Henry Street in Brooklyn and

Immanuel Church on McDonough Street were founded and served by the Atlantic Circuit of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church. In Flushing there is Trinity Church and in Hempstead Gardens another Trinity Church of the Norwegian synod.

One of the most interesting features about the Norwegians is their activity in the Inner Mission movement. This is a peculiarly Lutheran institution not to be confused with the Home Missionary Society. It began in Germany in the 19th Century as a social service movement. Sunday Schools, Prison Reform, aid to discharged prisoners and prostitutes as well as aid for all needy people came out of this development. The Norwegians maintain a Deaconess's home and hospital in Brooklyn, a day nursery the Bethesda Rescue Mission and a children's home. In addition, and peculiarly Norwegian, is the Norwegian Seamen's Home in Brooklyn, a haven for sailors far from their native land. Seamen's homes like the one in Brooklyn were begun and maintained by missionaries from Norway.

The Inner Mission, it may be said, is also an active institution among other Lutherans particularly the Germans. Emphasis was given to the protection of immigrants from swindles and persecution. Around eight immigrant houses were organized during the latter half of the 19th Century in the Greater New York area.

For the few Danes of Brooklyn there is a church on 9th Street. The Finns have two churches. One on 44th Street in Brooklyn was founded in 1890 and is a member of the Finnish Suomi Synod. The other on 42nd Street is called the Finnish Apostolic Church and has connection with that synod.

The turn of the century was full of promise for the Lutheran Church in America and the New York-Long Island area shared in the general advance. For one thing there was a movement toward closer unity and fellowship among the fragmentary branches of the church. In 1918, the General Council, General Synod and General Synod of the South united as the United Lutheran Churches of America. This group of which the New York Ministerium was a part is the largest Lutheran body. A further step toward unity came in 1930 when the Buffalo Synod already alluded to united with the Iowa and Ohio Synods to form the American Lutheran Church. This organization has four churches on Long Island: St. Paul's at Port Jefferson Station, St. John's-By-The-Sea at Long Beach, Church of the Incarnation at Cedarhurst and the Oceanside Church at Oceanside. Other less closely organized groups like the Synodical Conference and the National Lutheran Council provide a basis of cooperation among the more independent synods like Missouri and Augustana.

The twentieth century also saw the rapid advance of Lutheranism in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. St. Peter's Church at Huntington Station was founded as a mission in 1908 to serve the many Scandinavian and German settlers in and around Huntington. One of its most able pastors, Rev. Paul Palmeyer, was instrumental in the building up of a fine Lutheran church, St. Paul's, in East Northport, which was organized in 1914 by a group of local Lutherans who met in the fire station until their church was built.



In 1918, a small church, Our Redeemer, was founded at Riverhead, the county seat of Suffolk. Along the south shore of Suffolk County is the Christ Church of Islip Terrace which was founded in 1915. It is a member of the United Lutheran Church. At Bay Shore is St. Luke's which was founded in 1925. At Amityville is St. Paul's Church which was founded by a mission of the Missouri Synod in 1930. The congregation met in the Bank Building on the corner of Broadway and Green Avenue until the church was built. Islip is such an extensive field that Grace Church in Central Islip had to be built in 1943 to care for the overflow from Trinity Church of Islip. Both are of the Missouri Synod.

The growth of Lutheranism in Nassau County since 1900 has been amazingly rapid. During the early 1900s the United Church spread its influence in the founding of the Freeport church in 1909, St. Stephen's at Hicksville in 1910, St. Luke's at Farmingdale in 1911 and St. John's of Lynbrook in 1912. During the period immediately after the first World War others appeared like the church at Franklin Square in 1923, First Lutheran Church at Babylon in 1924, Christ's Church in Wantagh in 1926 and St. John's of Bellmore in 1928. More recent are such churches as the North Valley Stream Church of the Atonement which was founded in 1943.

Most of the Nassau County Lutheran churches of the Missouri Synod date from the period following the First World War. The Church of Our Saviour at Port Washington, for example, was organized by a mission in 1920 and met first in a barrack moved over from Camp Mills. The church at Glen Cove was founded in the same year by a group of Swedish families who had moved to Glen Cove from New York. Services for them were conducted at first in Swedish. The church at Seaford was founded ten years later as a mission, there being a considerable number of Lutheran fishermen in the neighborhood. The most recent area of Lutheran advance has been New Hyde Park where a congregation was organized in 1942. It was founded to serve the spiritual needs of Lutherans settling in the newly converted housing area.

We have mentioned only some of the Lutheran churches which have been organized in eastern Long Island since the time of the First World War. Enough have been mentioned, however, to give an indication of the extent to which Lutheranism has become a part of the Long Island scene. Both of the large branches of the Lutheran Church and the smaller synods too have shown amazing gains in the past two decades.

It is interesting to note that most of the churches of the Missouri Synod are to be found along the north shore and in the north central part of the island. As a matter of fact most of them follow the Long Island Rail Road in a roughly continuous line between Hicksville and Riverhead. They are to be found in the neighborhood of the rich farming land of the northern part of the island. Most of their parishioners are farmers who till the soil and plant potatoes. They are of Swedish, Danish and Finnish descent as well as German for no longer can the Missouri Synod be considered German.

The religion of these people is orthodox. They adhere strictly to the fundamental principles of the Christian Religion as expressed in the Augsburg Confession and as interpreted by Luther. They are particularly concerned with the religious education of their children and maintain a parochial school at Mineola to contribute to that end. Their churches have the usual activities—ladies' aid societies, men's Bible classes, and young people's fellowships. Services are well attended and have a beautiful liturgy which reminds one of Episcopal worship.

The United Lutheran Church is larger. It has some ninety-four churches on Long Island including Queens and Brooklyn. In 1929, a Long Island Conference was organized and the Lutheran churches of the United Church are members of it. In general, the churches of this synod are concentrated along the south shore in the more or less urbanized resort towns there. Their congregations are also mixed, being of Scandinavian and German parishioners alike.

There is little difference any more between the churches of the Missouri Synod and those of the United Lutheran Church. Both agree on the same basic principles in theology and differ only in intensification. In polity all Lutheran churches are for most practical purposes congregational. Many congregations whose pastors are of the Missouri Synod are not even aware of the fact. In the United Lutheran Church the relationship between congregation and synod is a little more close. Lutheran pastors have complete freedom of the pulpit and their characteristic preference for conservative doctrine is entirely their own choice. The pastor is ordained by the synod but his being received in the church and his tenure there is a matter between himself and the congregation.

Lutherans may feel justly proud of their denomination's progress on Long Island. Considering the relatively short time it has been in existence on Long Island, its advance has been amazing. The progress of one hundred years—from the founding of St. John's on Schermerhorn Street in 1844 until the present when there are over one hundred churches on Long Island—has been remarkable to say the least. There is now scarcely a town on Long Island but which has a Lutheran Church. The progressive decentralization of New York City with the accompanying spread of urban residential districts further and further east on Long Island is opening new fields of advance for the Lutheran Church. Its future indeed looks promising.





## CHAPTER XXVII

### *The Flora of Long Island\**

GEORGE H. PETERS

#### ORIGIN AND RELATION TO GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

FORTY thousand years or so ago, a great mass of ice, in places thousands of feet thick, lay along the north shore of Long Island from the Brooklyn Narrows to Orient Point. This was the Great Ice Sheet of the Wisconsin Glacial Age which had reached its southern limit where the warm air currents from the sea gnawed off the face of the ice front as fast as the glacier moved down from the north. Year after year the struggle between the forces of cold and warmth continued along this line. And as on any battlefield, it was a scene of intense desolation and chaos. Great towering icefalls, deep crevasses, subglacial rivers, huge detached masses of intermingled ice, boulders and rock debris, and tremendous torrents of ice water laden with gravel and sand twisting erratically across the changing land surface toward the sea—all set the stage for this wild play. As here and there a gravel island reared itself above the swirling glacial streams, the first plant pioneers undoubtedly established themselves, only after years of apparent success perhaps to be swept away again in some new cataclysmic interplay of nature's struggling forces. But as the ice gradually receded, the ever prolific plant legions still covering the unglaciated lands to the south and each year broadcasting their seeds via bird, animal, wind and ocean currents, succeeded in settling their first permanent plant colony on Long Island's shores. Perhaps it was a grass, or a willow or some other bit of Arctic flora that came in as forerunner of our modern flora, but it is certain that as soon as the outwash plains of the south shore became partly stabilized, the plant invaders took over and followed the retreating glaciers step by step.

During the ages that followed the recession of this Pleistocene Ice Sheet from Long Island, the climate has changed from Arctic to temperate which in turn has caused a succession of the initial northern plants by encroaching southern species. This process has by no means been uninterrupted in this post-glacial age because there have been intermediate warmer and colder periods during which conditions varied considerably for the perpetuation and extension of certain plants. However, the general trend was a progressive movement of plant societies from south to north. The sparse vegetation of the bleak Arctic tundra gave way to the mossy fir and spruce forests which were subsequently crowded out by the more aggressive hardwood species following on their heels. This transformation of plant types due to climatological changes was quite general throughout Long

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\* An outline of its origin, composition and relation to human progress.



Island because of its generally flat topography, uniformity of elevation and even climate. However, because of slight variations in surface exposure, soil fertility and moisture, conditions favorable for the survival of individual plants or colonies of northern species occur occasionally.

Interesting records of apparent relict or "left over" northern plants on Long Island are the occurrence of the twin flower (*Linnaea borealis* var. *americana*) at Babylon in 1871, the existence up to recent years of a patch of northern crowberry (*Empetrum migrum*) at Montauk and in the same vicinity the only record of native red spruce on Long Island. These northern plants have apparently disappeared from Long Island but recent botanical collections still bring to light similar lingering rear-guards of the one-time widespread boreal flora, as witnessed by records of specimens of the northern white bog orchid (*Habenaria dilatata*) at such widely separated stations as Montauk and Smithtown, and the recent discovery of an "island" of northern species at Wyandanch, including such unusual items as the paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), Goldie's fern (*Dryopteris goldiana*) and round-leaved orchid (*Habenaria orbiculata*).

Likewise, instances of isolated specimens or rare colonies of typically southern plants seem to indicate that they are outposts of those plant species whose northward advance has barely reached this region. Random examples of such plants are the crested yellow orchid (*Habenaria cristata*) ranging from New Jersey to Florida but well established at Montauk; shrubby St. John's wort (*Hypericum densiflorum*) found in the pine barrens of New Jersey and southward but colonized extensively at Massapequa; fly poison (*Amianthium muscaetoxicum*), a liliaceous plant which reaches its farthest northeasterly limit in the low woods of Valley Stream; also a number of other southern species that were originally found in western Long Island but have been since exterminated, such as the willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), the silky leather-flower (*Clematis ochroleuca*) and great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*).

Another post-glacial factor in determining the extent and composition of the present day flora of Long Island in addition to that of climatological change was that of land elevation and subsidence. The past history and present tendency of such earth movements are a matter of geological question, but it appears evident that in the post-glacial period the shore line of the North Atlantic coast extended considerably east of its present location and that a "land bridge" existed along the shore between New England and New Jersey. The similarity of the pine barrens of Nova Scotia, Cape Cod, Long Island and New Jersey, points to some prehistoric continuous link which has been interrupted and whose component parts have been isolated by the subsidence of the coast.

#### PLANT LIFE ZONES

At the dawn of the modern period when the land surface of Long Island had become stabilized in approximately its present form, we find that the vegetative cover, broadly speaking, had adjusted itself

to a mild climate, typified by no great extremes in either heat or cold. In accordance with Dr. C. Hart Merriam's classification of North American life zones by the laws of temperature control, the climate of Long Island has been considered as being intermediate between the Carolinian (Upper Austral) and the Alleghanian (Transition) Life Zones. The northern limit of the Carolinian Zone is defined as including the area where the "sum of the mean daily temperatures above 43° F. annually reaches a total of 11,500°." By this definition, this area in New York State includes Staten Island, the Hudson Valley north to Saratoga and the principal portion of Long Island. Consequently, representative species of the Carolinian Life Zone are found invading Long Island from its western end and extending irregularly eastward towards Montauk Point. Among such typical southern plants are the tulip tree, hackberry, sour gum, sycamore, red gum, persimmon, downy poplar and swamp magnolia.

According to Dr. Merriam, the Alleghanian or Transition Life Zone maintains its southern limit where the isotherm for the six hottest weeks is estimated to be 71.6° F. In western Long Island the average temperature of the hottest six weeks of summer is between 72° and 73.5° F. and in eastern Long Island it varies between 71° and 72.4°. These temperature ranges indicate that the Alleghanian Zone barely reaches eastern Long Island but since the boundaries of these zones must be very elastic, it is to be expected that characteristic Alleghanian Zone plant associations are found locally in cooler situations throughout Long Island. Typical forest trees of this plant zone are the hemlock, beech, gray birch, sugar maple and white pine which are found locally scattered in the mixed stands of the southern chestnut, walnut, oaks and hickories. Thus Long Island, lying almost east and west along a parallel of latitude, forms a connecting bridge between the Carolinian and Alleghanian life zones and so exhibits all the richness and confused mixtures of meeting and overlapping floral and faunal groups.

#### PLANT DISTRIBUTION AND ECOLOGICAL TYPES

Because of the general uniformity of Long Island's climate and elevation, the distribution of plants is regulated largely by moisture, soil diversity and slope exposure. The two north shore moraines of rolling hills, the flat central sandy outwash plains and the beaches and marshes of the south shore roughly determine the great subdivisions of plant types on Long Island. Within these three broad geographical divisions, a number of distinct types may be distinguished by classifying the plant communities in relation to the environment in which they are found. These ecological types are the mixed deciduous forest, fresh water marsh, salt water marsh, sand dune-beach, prairie, oak brush plains, pine barrens and moor. These eight readily recognizable plant associations can be further subdivided according to local varying conditions, and many intermediate and transition types may be recognized, but those listed dominate the vegetative landscape of Long Island.



*Mixed Deciduous Forest*

The mixed deciduous forest type is by far the most important and as indicated by its name, the most diverse ecological group. It was originally found wherever rich, moist soils predominate and was composed of a wide variety of plant species. When the white man first set foot on Long Island, a heavy stand of large trees practically covered all of the western portion of the island and extended far out to the east along the hilly terminal moraine. These were the "Great



(Courtesy of Brooklyn Botanic Garden)

*Giant White Oak at Locust Valley*  
*Over 17 Feet in Girth, 45 Feet Above Ground*

Woods" that drew such excited praise from our first settlers. Daniel Denton writing in 1670 exclaims, "The greatest part of the Island is very full of timber, as oaks white and red, walnut trees, chestnut trees which yield store of mast for swine, also red maples, cedars, sarsifrage [sassafras?], Beach, Holly, Hazel with many more \* \* \* one may drive for hours through embowered lanes, between thickets of alder and sumach, overhung with chestnut and oak and pine, or through groves gleaming in spring with the white bloom of the dogwood, glowing in fall with liquidamber and pepperidge, with sassafras, and the yellow light of the smooth shafted tulip tree."

Denton's lyrical description of the original virgin forests of Long Island does not exaggerate the richness of plant variety and magnificent growth that characterized these forests. Besides the most common trees mentioned by him, other tree species such as cherry birch, black cherry, mockernut hickory, sycamore, white ash, elm, scarlet



oak, basswood and mulberry were also found in rich flats or uplands. Beneath this lofty green roof, a wealth of undergrowth flourished. Flowering dogwood, black haw, blue beech, witch hazel, maple-leaved arrow-wood (*Viburnum acerifolium*), fox grape, woodbine, bitter-sweet and mountain laurel were prominent among those species which formed the second story of low trees, vines and shrubs. On the ground surface, the mixed forest of the uplands supported a large number of flowering plants and ferns which exhibited a very close relationship to the rich forests of the Hudson Valley and Connecticut. In the spring the hills of western Long Island where this forest type reached its maximum development were carpeted with color and luxuriant vegetation. Splendid beds of white-starred bloodroot, yellow dog-tooth violet, delicate rue anemone, violet wood sorrel, blue-white hepatica, fragrant trailing arbutus, nodding bellworts, violets and many other species of flowers and ferns were common. Today the growing metropolis has nearly obliterated these fine stands and only in obscure corners along the state parkways or on large estates do we find a few lingering remnants of this ancient woodland flora.

The fertile upland flats and gently rolling hills have particularly suffered the encroachment of civilization since these areas were most desirable for cultivation and home construction. On the other hand, the wet woods and swamps along the streams and around the kettle-hole ponds were the last to feel man's transforming hand. In these situations are still found tracts of the primitive woods containing fine specimens of white oak, red gum, tulip tree, swamp maple, beech, sour gum and red oak with a shrub understory of spice bush, sweet pepperbush, swamp white azalea, poison sumach, shadbush (*Amelanchier oblongifolia*), witch hazel, high bush blueberry, winterberry (*Ilex verticillata* and *laevigata*) and nanny berry (*Viburnum cassinoides*). Protected from strong winds and glaring sun, and always assured of cool wet roots, certain plants cover the swamp forest floor with almost tropical luxuriance. Here reign the piquant skunk cabbage, the fuzzy-stemmed cinnamon fern, the diminutive wild lily-of-the-valley, the trailing swamp blackberry (*Rubus hispidus*), the edible Indian cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*), the acrid-rooted Indian turnip, the dainty wood anemone, the five-finger-leaved Virginia creeper, the drab bugle weed (*Lycopus uniflorus*), various violets, and a vast profusion of ferns, among which are commonly found the royal, sensitive, Massachusetts, New York, marsh, American shield, Virginia chain and lesser chain ferns.

### *Fresh Water Marsh*

The fresh water marsh type is found throughout Long Island in varying extent along lake shores, bordering open streams and in wet depressions. The very flat topography, "kettle holes" and sluggish streams on the island are naturally conducive to forming marshes and bogs. However, the marsh type is not as extensive as might be expected, not only because of the general prevalence of porous subsoils but also because the marsh frequently takes only temporary possession of wet situations and is later displaced by the climax



wooded swamp. The marsh has attained its best development where the water courses sloping down from the hills encounter large flat areas along the bays of the south shore. Here, the tendency of incoming tides is to retard the outflow of fresh water and thus create a wide belt of fresh water marsh just above high tide mark.

In the warm sunlight and constant water supply of the fresh water marsh, optimum conditions occur for the profuse growth of grasses, sedges, rushes, ferns and herbaceous plants. Trees are found only as scattered individuals on knolls of higher ground or as advance members of the encroaching forest type. However, a number of shrubs are characteristic of the marsh and in certain localities dominate the vegetation. Among these are the arrow-wood, leather leaf, button-ball bush, steeple bush, smooth alder, swamp rose, inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), sweet gale (*Myrica Gale*), male berry (*Lyonia ligustrina*) and fetter-bush (*Leucothoë racemosa*). The list of herbaceous marsh plants is a long one, but only a few of the most common and conspicuous ones can be mentioned here; the splendid Turk's cap lily, the slender and larger blue flags, the narrow-leaved and broad-leaved cat-tails, the yellow and white fringed orchids, the narrow-leaved sunflower, the poisonous water hemlock, the purple Joe-Pye weed, the white turtlehead, the vivid cardinal flower, the blue skull-cap, the explosive-fruited touch-me-not, the swamp milkweed, the tall meadow rue and the flamboyant pink marsh mallow. In wet sandy spots and along shore lines, where sphagnum moss flourishes, interesting plants found are the fly-catching sundews (*Drosera rotundifolia* and *longifolia*), showy meadow beauty, yellow-eyed grass, Calopogon orchid, yellow hedge-hyssop, fragrant ladies tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) and the small and large cranberries. In eastern Long Island the large cranberry covers extensive boggy areas forming a distinctive and commercially important form of the marsh type.

Before leaving consideration of the fresh marsh vegetation, mention must be made of the closely associated aquatic plants. Since Long Island has few lakes and only minor short streams, water plants are confined to only a few species. The white water lily and the yellow cow lily are common, and to a less conspicuous extent, species of pondweed, duckweed, arrow-head, bladderwort, water-milfoil, bur-reed, pipe-wort, water-plantain and water-starwort are of frequent occurrence.

#### *Salt Water Marsh*

Five per cent of the land area of Long Island, or approximately 38,000 acres, is occupied by tidal salt marsh located principally in the chain of quiet bays between the barrier beach and the mainland of the south shore. These grassy meadows are only a few feet above mean sea level and are subject to complete inundation during periods of extreme high tide. The resulting salinity of the peaty and mucky soil restricts the vegetative cover to a comparatively few but widespread species of plants. The two shrubs which are commonly found along the many channels and ditches that network these marshes are the spicy scented marsh elder (*Iva oraria*) and the white tasselled

groundsel tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*). However, it is the grasses and sedges that form the distinctive vegetation, composed principally of the three species of salt marsh grass (*Spartina cynosuroides*, *patens* and *stricta*), the "black grass" of salt hay fame (*Juncus Gerardi*), the spike grass (*Distichlis spicata*) and the salt marsh bulrush (*Scirpus robustus*). On protected saline mud flats is found a peculiar group of succulent plants with aborted or minute leaves. These include the sea blite, the saltwort and the glassworts, which in the fall turn a gay red and give a touch of color to the otherwise drab marshes.

Only in the brackish areas and along the upper limits of high tide do we find large flowered plants growing to any conspicuous extent in the salt marshes. Here, however, a number of beautiful flowers find conditions to their liking. On some of the moist flats behind the sand dunes of the barrier beach, the sea pink (*Sabbatia stellaris*) grows in rich profusion and suffuses the meadows with thousands of its yellow-eyed pink flowers. Here also in late summer, wide stretches of salt meadow are studded with hosts of rose-purple seaside Gerardia, in company with the dainty blue sea lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*), the salt marsh golden rod, the bright yellow sun-drops, the fleshy salt marsh aster, and the camphoric marsh fleabane (*Pluchea camphorata*).

#### *Sand Dune-Beach*

A rise in elevation of only a foot above the salt marsh along the ocean beach produces an amazing change in plant population and ushers in the sand dune-beach type. Here in the sterile, porous, white quartz sands and subjected to fierce buffeting winds, only a small company of specially adapted plants can survive. Paradoxically, the inimical forces of nature against which these plants must wage bitter struggle in order to exist also act as a confederate in keeping out a vast number of plants which under more favorable conditions would crowd out their sand dune competitors. If a plant can survive the barrenness of the soil, the beating winds, the excoriation of wind-driven sand, the occasional overwhelming by tidal storms, the burning white glare of the summer sun, and the difficult search for water, then it will be respected by its neighbors and afforded plenty of room to live. Similar in many respects to desert vegetation, the sand dune plants are modified in their own special way to withstand the pummeling of the elements and excessive evaporation. Plants such as the sea rocket, seabeach sandwort (*Arenaria peploides*), seaside spurge, sea blite and prickly pear depend on thick, tough, fleshy leaves and stems to protect their cellular life substance. The beach pea and dusty miller send down deep roots searching for a constant supply of moisture; the pine barren sandwort (*Arenaria caroliniana*) and woolly Hudsonia rely on their minute hairy leaves to minimize evaporation; the grasses, notably the beach grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) and the giant reed (*Phragmites*), possess leaves and stems that are tough, pliable and provided with a hard, impervious surface. The beach plum and the bayberry, which are the two most common shrubs,



have deep root systems and an innate hardiness sufficient for them to survive and thrive. Dominant in their own domain, these plants extend along the wave-beaten beaches and over the wind-blown dunes in a narrow circumferential strip around Long Island and constitute a distinctive and beautiful feature of its landscape.

Within the confines of the beach sand dunes of Fire Island, bordering Great South Bay, is a unique plant association worthy of special mention. This is the famous "Sunken Forest" so called because it lies between ridges of sand dunes, with its tree tops kept to the level of the ridge crests by the shearing ocean winds. Because at a distance the forest is completely hidden by the dunes, its first view comes as a startling surprise. For here, amid the sparseness of the dune vegetation is found a dense wilderness of pitch pine, red cedar, holly, cat brier, various oaks, Virginia creeper, bayberry, fox grape, high bush huckleberry, beach plum, choke berry and poison ivy, growing together in intermingled confusion. In the shady depths of this gnarled and ancient forest, draped with lichens, the nearby ocean surf is only faintly heard and unconvincingly reminds one of the circumambient beach-world beyond the dune tops. This protected forest seems to indicate that the principal governing factor of plant distribution in the sand dune-beach type is the degree of exposure to the ocean wind.

### *Prairie*

The occurrence of a natural prairie on Long Island is a strange botanical anomaly in the vegetation of eastern America. Amid the luxuriant forest, shrub and herbaceous plant growth that universally confronted the early settlers, the existence of the Hempstead Plains, an inland grassy, treeless area sixteen miles long and covering sixty thousand acres, is a scientific oddity. As stated in a federal soils survey report, this plain constitutes the only area of well drained, dark colored soil east of the Appalachian mountains. Various reasons have been advanced for this unusual condition, but no completely satisfactory theory has been offered. Whatever was the original cause that created this prairie, undoubtedly its persistence against encroachment by the surrounding forests is due to a combination of extremely rapid percolation of rainfall down through the porous gravel subsoil, the high evaporative power of the air, the thinness of the surface soil, the existence of a compact dense turf and the extensive grazing that occurred during colonial times.

The predominant plant of the Hempstead Plains, exceeding in number all other species combined, is the prairie beard grass (*Andropogon scoparius*), which is also locally known as bunch grass, red-stem, broom grass or big blue joint. This is the grass that captures the fall landscape of the plains with its waving blanket of russet stems and plumose flowers. Other grasses commonly associated with the beard grass are the Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Greene's rush (*Juncus Greenei*) and the wavy hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*). Before these grasses attain their new growth in the spring, great areas of the plains take on a celestial hue due to thousands of

bouquets of pale blue bird's-foot violets. Interspersed in this blue carpet are found the pink milkwort (*Polygala polygama*), the blue-eyed grass and the slender blue toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*). Later in the summer many other interesting plants brighten the plains with a medley of color. Among these are the yellow laden globular bushes of wild indigo, the ten-lobed purple Gerardia, the white spikes of the colic root, the yellow star grass, the white belled stagger bush, the sun-loving rock-rose (*Helianthemum dumosum*), the tough stemmed cat-gut or perhaps using a more genteel name the goat's rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), the silvery leaved sage willow (*Salix tristis*), the slender ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes gracilis*), and the stiff-leaved aster (*Aster linariifolius*). These plants are being rapidly exterminated in the Hempstead Plains area as the expanding population of New York City replaces the primitive prairie with its own plant community of suburban gardens and lawns. The day is approaching when this unique plant association will have dwindled to only a few unrepresentative remnants and only the records will indicate its important place in Long Island's botanical history.

#### *Oak Brush Plains*

Along the eastern edge of the Hempstead Plains, in the neighborhood of Hicksville and Farmingdale, thickets of scrub oak appear which, as we proceed easterly, become more and more extensive until the whole outwash plain is covered from horizon to horizon with a solid shrubby mass, hardly more than a few feet high. These are the famous "Brushy Plains" of the early colonists which George Washington described in his diary as being a country "too poor to admit inhabitants or cultivation, being a low scrubby oak, not more than two feet high, intermixed with small and ill thriven Pines." These oak brush areas occupy the greater portion of the center of the island where sterile, porous sands and gravels prevail. Because of the barrenness of this region, it has since Washington's time in general successfully resisted the inroads of the agriculturist. Even the great fires, which in late fall or early spring periodically sweep through these brushy barrens, do not seem to daunt the viability of the vegetation, for in a few years the plains are again green with their shrubby cover. Two species of scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia* and *prinoides*) make up the bulk of the vegetation; the former is especially common, sometimes occurring in pure stands, miles in extent. The pitch pine is generally associated with the scrub oaks and if undisturbed by fire tends to establish itself as the dominant tree species. In very sandy areas the oak brush becomes sparse and there occur occasional openings of pure white sand where we find the bearberry or kinnikinic, the heath Hudsonia (*Hudsonia ericoides*), the ipecac spurge (*Euphorbia Ipecacuanhae*), the blue lupine, the wild pink (*Silene pennsylvanica*), the butterfly weed, blue-eyed grass, sweet fern (*Myrica asplenifolia*), cat brier and the low bush blueberries. Mention must also be made of the scattered occurrence, according to local site conditions, of a number of species of larger oaks such as the white oak, black oak, scarlet oak, post oak, and black jack oak.



On better soil areas these oaks attain ascendancy over the scrub oak and form an intermediate but extensive oak woods subtype merging into the mixed deciduous forest.

### *Pine Barrens*

The physical characteristics of the oak brush and pine barren types are very similar and consequently these two types merge imperceptibly and replace each other according to local circumstances. The plants listed under the oak brush type are also to be found locally occurring where the pitch pine becomes dominant. The claim of the pine barrens for distinction as a major plant type on Long Island is due to the large areas where the pitch pine grows in abundance in nearly pure stands. These pine barrens range from the center of the island easterly to the Shinnecock Hills where in company with the red cedar they make up the few patches of trees found in protected areas of these otherwise bare and wind-swept hills. Because of repeated fires and heavy cutting, the pitch pine forest of today is usually composed of stunted low trees, not at all indicative of the time two hundred years ago when pitch pine from twenty inches to thirty-six inches in diameter were abundant.

### *Moor*

In eastern Long Island at the tip of the southern fluke there exist approximately six thousand acres of grassy, rolling hills known as the Montauk Downs. They are very similar in aspect and plant type to the coastal Downs of Sussex in England, and undoubtedly result from the same causal factor of violent wind exposure. According to Weather Bureau records, Montauk Point is the windiest spot on the Atlantic Coast. It has twice as much wind as the center of the island, and averages one hundred and nine separate winds a year whose velocity is over fifty miles an hour. The buffeting and evaporative effect of these winds is particularly destructive to plants of large wind resistance and evaporative surface. Hence conifers are noticeably absent and deciduous trees are found on the moors only as distorted individuals or in normal groups in valleys and in situations that are protected. Certain species of shrubs, noteworthy the bayberry, Carolina rose, cat brier, shadbush and winterberry achieve a considerable success in withstanding the rigorous winds, and in some places appear to be slowly spreading. These shrubs form hundreds of small "islands" of thicket scattered over the grassy hills and create a spectacular springtime display when the shadbush is in bloom. The four grass-like plants which comprise the bulk of the vegetative cover are the same species found so commonly on the Hempstead Plains, viz., the prairie beard grass, Indian grass, wavy hair-grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and Greene's rush (*Juncus Greenei*). Among the common herbaceous plants are the plantain-leaf everlasting (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*) which forms great white beds of cottony flowers; the pink milkwort, the white-topped aster (*Seriocarpus asteroides*) and the purple Gerardia. Of unusual interest on these moors is the wide prevalence of the reindeer moss

(*Cladonia rangiferina*) which commonly makes a gay, crisp mat among the grasses and flowering plants.

In the Shinnecock Hills, about thirty miles west of the Montauk Downs, a similar treeless and wind-exposed area of sandy rolling hills is found. It forms only a narrow barrier either to the full force of the ocean winds from the south or the unimpeded winter winds sweeping in from Peconic Bay on the north. In consequence, all exposed points and slopes exhibit characteristics similar to the Montauk Downs but different in the greater proportion of shrubby growth occurring. The blueberries (*Vaccinium pennsylvanicum* and *vacillans*), the huckleberries (*Gaylussacia frondosa* and *baccata*), bearberry, Hudsonia, shadbush, impenetrable masses of cat brier, the chokeberry, bayberry, blackberry, sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), choke cherry and poison ivy—all have proven to thrive despite the winds, drought and fire that in recurring cycles over several hundreds of years have prevented the red cedar, pitch pine, post oak and white oak from conquering these hills.

#### *Diversity of Plant Types and Richness of Flora*

Although the principal plant societies indigenous to Long Island have been broadly sketched under the eight foregoing ecological categories, it must be remembered that this classification is only an arbitrary convenience and that each subtype which was mentioned could have been equally treated with the importance of a separate type. Plant types on Long Island intergrade extensively and vary locally because of their intimate dependence on slight changes of moisture, soil fertility or salinity. The usual important factors of topography, elevation, and climate play little part in differentiating ecological types on Long Island but because of their uniformity provide a mild, generally fertile and receptive land for the sustenance of a wide variety of plant species. It is this geniality of environment that enables a sandy island with no cliffs, rock outcrops, gorges, mountains, limestone, large rivers or heavy soils to maintain a richness of plant life unique for a geographical unit of its size.

#### THE EFFECT OF MAN'S TRANSFORMING HAND

As the white man moved across the face of the land he was followed by a host of plant invaders that have since established themselves as a permanent part of the island's naturalized vegetation in the meadows, waste lands, hedgerows, roadsides, old fields, cutover forests and city lots. New plant types have been formed, and the flowers strange to the Indian are now accepted by the child "as always having been there". The locust, now so securely naturalized on Long Island, is not native, but according to tradition was introduced about 1700 at Sands Point whence the settlers carried the seedlings the length of the island for establishment of fence-post lots. A later arrival is the Ailanthus, or Tree of Heaven, plucked out of a Chinese temple yard to become the green badge of Brooklyn, and to rise triumphant out of the city's stones where no other plant dares live.



To balance these two accessions to the list of Long Island's trees, the strange ways of man caused a sad page of American botanical history to be written when the blight disease, accidentally introduced early in the 1900s, swept the magnificent chestnut from the American scene. In the Long Island woods, the chestnut sprouts still bravely linger, and in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, man attempts to discover a blight-resistant strain, but the great change in our Long Island woods will never be undone.

The lesser plant newcomers form a familiar lot. They are our garden and roadside weeds, immigrants from Europe and Asia, which have usurped an unwelcome intimacy with the white man's life. Now thoroughly naturalized, the dandelion, tansy, purslane, shepherd's purse, knotweed, mullein, plantain, burdock, Canada thistle, hawkweed, pigweed, wild mustard, chickweed and many others, all came as unnoticed passengers in the seed and fodder carried by the early colonists into the New World. These are Old World nuisances which sometimes become genuine New World afflictions. One of the worst of these is the Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), which despite its mitigating fragrance, has become a troublesome juggernaut in some areas of Long Island, smothering all other plant growth, forming solid mats on the ground, overrunning shrubs and trees, and even conquering the assertive cat brier. Another plant, whose occurrence on Long Island suggests the possibility of a similar complete seizure of large areas by one species is the European purple loosestrife (*Lythrum Salicaria*) which has run rampant in nearly every moist meadow in the Hudson Valley. This brilliantly flowered shrub is established near Southampton, Babylon and at other points on Long Island and, if it follows its behavior elsewhere, will eventually spread its glorious magenta blanket over many of our fresh water marshes at the expense of multitudes of less robust species.

#### NOTABLE PLANT SPECIMENS AND SPECIES ON LONG ISLAND

Undoubtedly the virgin forest contained magnificent tree giants and cathedral groves which far exceeded in size and grandeur anything that exists at the present time. We now have no trees that compare with the black walnut that once stood on the William Cullen Bryant estate at Roslyn and measured twenty-nine feet in circumference, but here and there still are found a few patriarchs which date back to prehistoric times of aboriginal glory. The largest living tree on Long Island is the American sycamore at Wheatley which measures over twenty-seven feet in circumference one foot above the ground, just below its first large limb; the largest northern red oak in the United States is on Lloyds Neck and measures over nineteen feet in circumference; the largest holly, black oak, and white oak of New York State are also located on Long Island.

Besides holding these big tree records and being the proud possessor of many historic trees, Long Island still maintains some of the finest stands of timber found within hundreds of miles of New York City. On Gardiner's Island up to the time of the damaging hurricanes of 1938 and 1944, there were sixteen trees over nine feet

in circumference growing on one acre, and many times more than that number between six and nine feet in girth. Among other examples of magnificent and spectacular plant scenes on Long Island are—the dogwood, whose legions endlessly fill the rich woods with great blizzards of bloom and give the crowning glory to Long Island spring; mountain laurel, crowding miles of hillside along the moraine with June color; acres of prickly pear at Orient laden with their big yellow blossoms; the south shore marshes, gaudily bedecked with innumerable riotous autumnal flowers; the shadbush at Montauk; the lupines in great masses of bloom in late May throughout the oak and pine barrens; the beach plums of Hither Hills, Fire Island and Promised Land; the blue expanse of bird's foot violets on the Hempstead Plains; the wet woods heavy scented from thousands of white spired sweet pepperbush and azalea—and many more masterpieces of nature for the eyes' delight and the memory's treasure.

#### PLANTS AND HUMAN PROGRESS ON LONG ISLAND

The native Indian was directly dependent upon the wilderness for his food, habitation, clothes and medicines. Since the pioneer white man in a large measure likewise had to fall back upon the natural fruits and forage of the land, especially during the difficult initial years, the part played by our native plants in the colonial economy was an important one. The winter larder of the settler was filled with bushels of various nuts; dried shadbush berries, blueberries, cranberries, huckleberries and cherries; bayberries for candle wax; milkweed down for beds, cloth and paper; jams and jellies of plum, grape, strawberries and other fruits; and even perhaps a supply of ground nut roots. The medicine cupboard was an intriguing and aromatic array of mints, wild ginger, sweet flag, sassafras root, wild cherry bark, slippery elm, sweet birch, wintergreen, pleurisy root, spice bush, witch hazel, pennyroyal and a host of others. In the spring, many young shoots and leaves contributed to the proverbial "tonics" and "potgreens", that were so important to the health of the settler.

As transportation and horticulture developed, the economic part played by the native flora changed in emphasis from one of individual family importance to one of community and social importance. Industries based upon utilization of the products of native plants began to



(By Courtesy of Edwin Way Teale)

*Dogwood in Full Bloom*  
*The Spring Glory of Long Island*



spring up and exert their influence upon the growing prosperity of the island. Minor industries such as harvesting hay from the salt meadows, furnishing forage for large herds of cattle and sheep, cultivating cranberries, and gathering nuts, berries and other fruits for market—all were important factors in local development. Lumbering and woodcutting on Long Island, however, became one of the most important industries in the state and contributed tremendously to the rapid growth of New York City when wood was its only building material as well as its only fuel. One hundred and thirty years ago, the Town of Brookhaven was exporting annually no less than 100,000 cords of wood. Even as late as the Civil War, Suffolk County was listed as the first woodcutting county in New York State. This industry gave employment to many men in woodchopper camps and on the sloops and schooners transporting the cordwood from the many "landings" to the wood-hungry city, which had not yet adopted anthracite. This industry also caused the opening up of the country, encouraged the extension of the road system, and built up the small villages. Great fires following the completion of the Long Island Rail Road in 1844 have destroyed much of the young timber that remained after cutting, and perpetuated much of the "barrens" of today.

The plant heritage of Long Island has given both an aesthetic and economic richness to the life of the island's inhabitants, but is fated to disappear before the encroaching farm, garden and home. From the extreme eastern tip at Montauk Point to the heart of the greatest city in the world is only one hundred and eighteen miles, which distance is a trifle in this day of modern transportation. The city will crawl, run or fly to the tip of Orient and Montauk, and the forests, barrens and even salt marshes will disappear before the "Suburban City". Yet, all vestiges of the primeval Long Island will not entirely disappear because with the growing park consciousness of the modern citizen, will come an ever increasing demand for the extension of the park systems that have been developed so remarkably and masterfully in the last two decades. It is in the State, County and other municipal parks that we must look for a sanctuary for much of the native beauty of Long Island that we still enjoy and which our great-grandchildren will expect to be preserved for them.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### *The Mammals of Long Island*

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INSULAR life holds a peculiar fascination for the biologist. Whether he be botanist or zoologist, he strives to account, in some measure, for the distribution of the forms he sees or collects. How did they escape from the mainland? How have they become established across rips, wide channels, or extensive bodies of water? Some species have undoubtedly been introduced by man, others, through their ability to swim, have occupied the Island under their own power.

General works dealing with Long Island mammals are scarce. DeKay's account of the mammals of New York (*Zoology of New York, Mammalia*, 1842) is the first serious work. The veteran naturalist, Arthur H. Helme, published an account of Long Island mammals (*Abstract Linnaean Society of New York*, 1902, nos. 13-14, pp. 19-30) in which 31 land species were listed. Murphy and Nichols give an excellent account of the bats (*The Bats: Long Island Fauna and Flora—I, Science Bulletin, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1-15, 1913).

Since that time little specific information on the mammalian fauna of Long Island has appeared. The present writer published an account of eastern mammals (*The Mammals of Eastern United States*, Comstock Publishing Co., pp. 1-432, 1943) in which Long Island species were treated.

Unlike birds, the commonest of mammals will repay close study. We have yet to learn the exact mode of life of even the commonest species, and when we consider that some species may exceed a hundred individuals to the acre, we realize the economic role they must play. Since small mammals are for the most part both secretive and nocturnal, a real interest alone will bring forth new data on their life history. The writer will be glad to outline such procedures if the interested reader should care for such.

The present account deals with 33 species of land mammals known to occur on Long Island. With further study, others will undoubtedly be added to this list.

#### MARSUPIALIA (Opossums)

Some seventy years ago the opossum, *Didelphis virginiana*, was released on Long Island and since then has spread from Brooklyn to Montauk Point. Indeed, within the past half century it has spread throughout much of New York, being one of the few notable mammals which have increased their range within recent years.



The opossum approximates a house cat in size, weighing from four to ten pounds. Its short legs, large naked bicolored ears and long prehensile creamish white tail are good field characters. The whitish face, the long grizzled gray fur and the opposable nailless thumb of the hind foot serve to distinguish this beast from all other Long Island mammals of comparable size. The female, like most other marsupials, has a pouch in which the young are carried.

The singular reproductive behavior of the opossum has excited much interest. The young, numbering from 6 to 13, are born in a very undeveloped state, after the short gestation period of 11 or 12 days. These young, so small that 22 can be accommodated on a teaspoon, attach themselves to the nipples, where they remain for several weeks. When a month old, they are scarcely larger than a house mouse, and remain in the pouch another month before clambering over the mother, grasping her long fur tightly. Two litters a year are produced on Long Island.

The opossum is essentially a nocturnal beast, making its home during the day in some snug nest made of leaves and grass in a hollow stump, or a deserted woodchuck or skunk burrow. During the nightly foray, the opossum feeds on fruits, berries, insects, small mammals, reptiles and carrion; indeed, there is little it disdains. In the severest winter weather the opossum usually remains "holed up" for several days or a week at a time, although I caught one in a muskrat trap at Flushing during the severe winter of 1919-20, when sub-zero weather prevailed. The fur, while coarse and used chiefly for trimmings, is widely used in the fur trade. Trappers receive 35 to 70 cents for a good prime pelt. The flesh is esteemed by Southern hunters, but the few I have eaten have proved rather strong.

#### INSECTIVORA (Moles and Shrews)

The Order *Insectivora*, or insect eaters, is represented on Long Island by two moles and two shrews. The moles may at once be recognized by their huge paddle-like fore limbs, adapted for digging tortuous subterranean galleries, and their diminutive eyes, all but hidden in the facial fur. The shrews are, for the most part, tiny beasts, little noticed by the layman, but of worldwide distribution.

The most conspicuous Long Island species is the common or naked-tailed mole, *Scalopus aquaticus*. Almost every gardener or farmer is familiar with its tunnel-like burrows, and often lays the depredation of root crops to its door. Largely insectivorous, the common mole feeds on a variety of small animals. It may at once be recognized by its silky grayish fur and short naked tail.

The star-nosed mole, *Condylura cristata*, is recorded from Miller Place by Arthur H. Helme. It possibly occurs sporadically throughout the Island in suitable localities. The twenty-two fleshy nasal tentacles, the blackish fur and long tail serve to distinguish this species from all other Long Island mammals.

Of the shrews, the ubiquitous short-tailed shrew, *Blarina brevicauda*, is found in all suitable habitats. While it is often termed

“field mole” or “field mouse”, its sharp nose and tiny eyes serve to distinguish it from the rodents. It should be considered a welcome addition to the garden, as it feeds upon slugs, insects and other small fry which pilfer our crops.

The common or masked shrew, *Sorex cinereus*, has the distinction of being the tiniest of Long Island mammals, and for that matter, one of the smallest species in the world. Adults seldom exceed a penny in weight. They have brownish fur, long pointed snout and a long tail. One often finds them lying dead on woodland paths during the fall. I have found them under driftwood on the beaches of the North Shore, and trapped innumerable individuals in the Roslyn woods. Although one of our most abundant mammals, they seldom come to the notice of man.

#### CHIROPTERA (Bats)

Specialized as they are, bats are the only mammals which exhibit true flight. The digits of the fore limb are enormously enlarged to accomodate the membranes which serve as wings. Bats have small eyes and the wonderful dexterity they exhibit in avoiding obstacles while in flight is accomplished in a manner quite different from that of other mammals and birds. Flying bats emit supersonic notes, these sound waves striking the obstacle and being reflected back to their ears. Thus bats were utilizing the principle of radar long before man. Bats mate in the late summer or early fall, the sperm being stored by the female during the winter, fertilization occurring in early spring. Most species normally produce a single young, although the beautiful red bat customarily bears three or four, the combined weight of the growing young exceeding that of the mother. In spite of this, she is able to carry them about on her nocturnal forays for food. Our local bats are all insectivorous, consuming great quantities of small beetles, moths, mayflies, and other small winged forms. Bats do not carry the human bedbug, nor do they have any desire to tangle in a woman's tresses, although they frequently annoy people as they fly about the porch of a summer evening, intent only on garnering a meal which is attracted by the lights.

With the advent of cold weather, most of our bats hibernate, although some species, like the silvery-haired, red and hoary bats, migrate long distances to escape the Northern winter. I have seen these sporadic flights in mid-September at Montauk Point.

There are seven species of bats known to occur on Long Island. Of these, the little brown bat, *Myotis lucifugus*, is one of the commonest species. It may be recognized by its small size, the total length averaging  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The color is rich brown, often almost bronze. The long-eared brown bat, *Myotis keenii septentrionalis*, is an uncommon species, similar in appearance to the little brown bat. Its long ears, when laid forward, extend a short distance beyond the nostrils.

The silvery-haired bat, *Lasionycteris noctivagans*, is a fair-sized species and can at once be distinguished from other Long Island bats by its color. The pelage is dark blackish brown, the tips



of the hairs being marked with silver. This frosting is most pronounced along the middle of the back. The wing expanse is approximately twelve inches. These bats have been seen far from land flying a hundred feet or less above the choppy sea. They may actually pass the winter hidden in the furls of sails, hulls, and cabins of yachts. Even the hulls of ships in New York harbor and the churches of Long Island have proven a winter haven for this species.

The little pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus subflavus*, is a weak-flighted yellowish species. I have mistaken it for a large moth in the fading summer light, and have nearly succeeded in capturing one in an insect net.

The big brown bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*, is a large edition of the little brown bat. Its sepia-brown long fur is characteristic, and its large size serves to distinguish it from other brown species. This is the bat most frequently found about the house during the winter months. It seems to delight in occupying dwellings.

The red bat, *Lasiurus borealis*, is one of the commonest species on Long Island. Its short rounded ears and conspicuous bright reddish or rusty color are infallible field guides. The coat is normally frosted with white. These bats have been observed sweeping about the crowded streets of Brooklyn in quest of insects. I have taken them from the low branches of locust at Flushing during the day.

Rarest and most beautiful of Long Island bats is the great hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereus*, whose black leathery wings stretch sixteen inches across. Its yellowish brown to dark mahogany-brown hair is frosted with silver over the entire body, giving a pronounced hoary appearance to the animal. It is most common on Long Island during the fall, when migrating individuals attract attention by their huge size and rich color.

#### CARNIVORA (Flesh Eaters)

The carnivores, readily identified by their teeth, which indicate a meat diet, are world wide in distribution. Many are important to the fur trade, and not a few favor agriculture by their destruction of injurious rodents. Seven species are known to occur on Long Island.

The raccoon, *Procyon lotor*, scarcely needs description. Its black facial mask and ringed tail are excellent field marks. It is generally distributed, and its characteristic tracks may be seen on the mudflats and stream margins over the breadth of the Island. Many are taken for the pelts, which fetch the trapper two to eight dollars.

The New York weasel, *Mustela frenata noveboracensis*, is generally distributed, showing little preference in habitat, although I have seen signs most frequently in wet places. Years ago I found a nest at Alley Pond, Bayside and watched the parents bring field mice to their young. In the colder portions of New York this species acquires a pure white coat, save for the sable tail tip. The species is then known as ermine in the fur trade. On Long Island I have yet to record a white individual of this species. The smaller Bonaparte weasel, *Mustela erminea cicognanii*, is extremely rare on Long Island, although common in other parts of New York. The only record I

have is a photograph of one taken at Babylon. This specimen was in the white winter pelage. Weasels are inveterate mouse-hunters and do far more good than harm, although they have been discredited for ages by the hunter and poultry farmer.

The mink, *Mustela vison*, is a common inhabitant of both shores. As a boy, I caught several about Douglaston and Manhasset. Although scarcely larger than a gray squirrel, the mink has little trouble in overcoming and feasting on the muskrat, although this rodent may be twice the size of the mink. The mink is prized in the fur trade.

It is surprising to learn that the otter was not infrequently captured on Long Island as late as 1901. I find no recent records for the Island. It is possible that this strong swimmer could cross Long Island Sound. They have certainly increased greatly in numbers on the mainland during the past decade.

The skunk, *Mephitis m. nigra*, is a common resident of the Island. Helme records a decided decrease in their numbers with the appearance of the Colorado potato beetle, attributing their disappearance to feeding on these poisoned beetles in the potato fields. Twenty years ago they were numerous, and I have seen the characteristic tracks in the late winter snow scarcely ten miles from the East River. Highway mortality accounts for considerable destruction of this species, for the deliberate ways of the skunk leads to its own undoing. The skunk is omnivorous, feeding principally upon fruits, berries, insects, small reptiles, mammals and occasionally a bird. During the coldest weather the animals "hole up" for several weeks, but are not classed as true hibernators.

The red fox, *Vulpes fulva*, is a common species throughout Long Island. It is found from the sand dunes of Montauk to the settled portions of Queens County. In spite of persecution over the years, the fox more than holds its own. Hunt clubs have introduced the fox on Long Island for the express purpose of the "chase". Complaints have been received in the past few years of fox damage to ducks and poultry in Suffolk County. Throughout the state the red fox has shown an unprecedented increase in recent years. The food is varied. Roy Latham of Orient wrote me some years ago that he has actually seen foxes catch muskrats, moles, leopard- and bullfrogs and he also records about their dens wild ducks (scoters), domestic ducks and infertile eggs and cottontails. From April to November these animals feed upon the unmarketable marine fish, dumped by the trap fishermen. Foxes once broke up a large colony of breeding terns near Orient. John T. Nichols of Mastie writes that the majority of snapping turtle nests are destroyed by the foxes digging up and eating the eggs. I have examined a dead fox on the highway which had its stomach full of blueberries. The two to eight young are born in late winter, the young appearing above ground during April.

The gray fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, is less common on the Island, although it appears to be generally distributed in the scrub oak and pine of the central portion. The fur is coarse and thus not



highly valued in the fur trade. A good climber, the gray fox often eludes the hounds by running along a fence and taking refuge in the crotch of a low tree.

#### RODENTIA (Rodents or Gnawing Mammals)

The dozen species of rodents occurring on the Island belong to four families. All are characterized by sharp chisel-shaped incisors and the absence of canine teeth. Rodents far surpass all other orders of mammals in the number of species and also in the actual number of individuals.

The *Sciuridae*, or squirrel family, is well represented on the Island, including such diverse species as the woodchuck, chipmunk, gray squirrel and flying squirrel.

The woodchuck, *Marmota monax rufescens*, is tolerably common in Suffolk County, but scarce in the western portion of the Island. It causes some damage to the vegetable garden, eating back the new beans and sprouts of early vegetables. In the scrub oak it does little harm, providing homes for rabbits, foxes, and skunks in its deserted burrows. As fall approaches, the woodchuck acquires a store of fat upon which to draw during its winter sleep. After the first heavy frosts, and while food is yet abundant, this big rodent retires to a nest of leaves and grasses well below the ground to pass the colder months in a torpid sleep. The three to five young are born in April, and may be seen tumbling about the den entrance by mid-May.

The striped chipmunk, *Tamias striatus fisheri*, is abundant in wooded parks and dense garden spots over much of the Island. I have frequently seen this species in Suffolk County. When too numerous, it may prove a pest, digging up flowering bulbs and other prizes from the border. It has a confiding disposition and is readily tamed to feed from one's fingers. All during the summer and fall, the chipmunk is busy garnering seeds, nuts and other delicacies in its capacious cheek pouches, storing these in an underground chamber for winter use. Although this species hibernates, its sleep is interrupted throughout the winter, and storage of food is necessary if it is to survive during these periods. A large nest of shredded leaves is built in a bank or other well drained area in which the four or five young are produced in April.

The gray squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis leucotis*, needs no description. Its bulky leaf nest may be found in almost every woodlot on the Island. A hollow limb or sizeable bird house will often provide a nursery for the young which are born in the late winter while snow remains. The gray squirrel is a profligate feeder, taking a few elm seeds here, a maple bud there and letting the terminal twigs drop to the ground. It eschews no vegetable matter, and is not above consuming a luckless nestling, or a luscious caterpillar. Occasionally a black, or melanistic individual occurs. Such were far more common a century ago. Albinos are likewise not too great a rarity.

If the red squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus loquax* occurs on Long Island, that fact has not come to my attention. At the turn of the century, Helme had not recorded any after many years of field

observation and over a period of years of active field work on the Island. I have never seen one. Such is surprising, as they are common on the mainland and one might suspect that introduction, natural or otherwise, would have occurred ere now.

The flying squirrel, *Glaucomys volans*, is one of the most secretive of all Long Island mammals. Its large lustrous eyes are a stamp of nocturnal life, and the soft handsome gray pelage, the snow white underparts, prominent loose fold of skin extending from the wrists to the ankles and the flattened, well-furred tail all serve to distinguish this species. All too often, the only indication of its presence is finding the luckless body of one on our doorstep, victim of the cat. It lives like the other tree squirrels, often utilizing and roofing over a deserted crow's nest. Occasionally it will repair to a bird box. Flying squirrels are active throughout the winter. We have caught them in traps set for larger game during sub-zero weather.

Of the several species of wild mice which are found on Long Island, none are handsomer than the deer mouse, *Peromyscus leucopus noveboracensis*. Also known as the wood or white-footed mouse, this species is common in the woods and not infrequently in houses of the small villages, particularly during the colder months. Large black eyes, enormous ears, brownish upperparts (gray in the young) and snow-white belly are ready means of identification. Some years ago I uncovered a nest of these mice at Oyster Bay. The mother had capped over the nest of a brown thrasher, roofing it with leaves. Poking my finger into the nursery, I startled the mother, who ran off with several young clinging tightly to her teats. This is a common trait of the species. Deer mice feed on a miscellany of fruits, berries, small animals and quantities of insects. Indeed, all of our small mammals are useful in the biological control of insects, and often are more effective than birds in this respect.

The ubiquitous field or meadow mouse, *Microtus pennsylvanicus*, is perhaps the most abundant of Long Island mammals. It prefers a damp habitat, being found in its greatest numbers in the marshes and swamps. I have found it in swampy land five miles from Long Island City. It is a chunky, short-tailed mouse, grayish brown with dark underparts. The ear is not prominent, being partially hidden in the fur. In the fields and meadows it makes little trails the width of a garden hose which may be seen by parting the grass. During the high water of spring, many are flooded from their homes, and must find a precarious perch on driftwood. This species is the most prolific of all American mammals. A captive female has produced thirteen litters of young in a year, each litter numbering from three to seven. It feeds on grasses of all kinds, being destructive to alfalfa, timothy and choice perennials. Young fruit trees are girdled, often beyond repair, and the damage to agriculture may be considerable. In spite of this economic loss, this little beast serves some useful purpose. It is one of the principal foods of many hawks and owls, snakes and predatory mammals. Like many of our smaller mammals, the field mouse population is cyclic, each four years bringing a minor



plague of these rodents, which then are greatly reduced by disease or some other calamity.

A close relative, the Gull Island meadow mouse, *Microtus nesophilus*, confined to Great Gull Island at the entrance to Long Island Sound, was exterminated when suitable cover was removed during the construction of fortifications some years ago.

Another little vole, the pine mouse, *Pitymys pinetorum scalopsoides*, is a common resident of Long Island. It is a small robust species, with minute tail, silky mole-like fur and bright brown or chestnut above. It spends most of its life in underground tunnels, where, burrowing into the truck garden, it nibbles the potatoes and other root crops. Extensive damage may be caused to the roots of young orchard trees. Since it appears to have fewer enemies than the field mouse, its reproductive rate is not so great, which is a great blessing, as the pest is very difficult to control.

The muskrat, *Ondatra zibethica*, is nothing more than an overgrown field mouse. To be sure, the external appearance belies this assertion, but a comparison of the skulls will quickly show the true relationship. Muskrats are common in suitable localities throughout the Island. In the winter of 1919, I trapped a number about Plandome and Manhasset, receiving the all-time high price of \$4.25 a pelt. That same winter, over a thousand dollars worth of pelts were harvested from the salt marshes and creeks that later became the site of the World's Fair. Great numbers are trapped by school boys, indeed, this is the most important fur-bearer of North America. The prominent houses of cattails, salt grasses and detritus may often be seen from the highway. In tidewater, muskrats frequently utilize holes in the banks, a dry nest being built at the end of the tunnel well above the water level. The muskrat is primarily a vegetarian, feeding on a variety of aquatic succulents, although the large freshwater clams are likewise relished. Their chief enemy, other than man, is the mink, which enters the rat burrows and lodges in search of its prey.

The Norway rat, *Rattus norvegicus* and the house mouse, *Mus musculus*, need no description. All too well known, these pests have plagued man for centuries. Both species are said to have been introduced into the United States during the American Revolution, and have become firmly entrenched throughout the country. Both the rat and house mouse take to the fields with the advent of warm weather, returning to human habitation with the first frosts. Every town dump offers a breeding place for the rat, which thus populates the surrounding areas. Such disgraceful conditions are tolerated everywhere and quite needlessly.

One rodent remains, the graceful little jumping mouse, *Zapus hudsonius americanus*, whose extraordinary long tail and elongated hind limbs have given it the appellation of "kangaroo mouse". It wears a yellowish coat, with darker dorsal band. The underparts are white. This species is not uncommon in grassy fields, the overgrown ditch border or the meadow. It feeds on the heads of various grasses, cutting the close-growing stems into match-size lengths until

the seed heads are reached. In the late summer it is a little ball of fat, and by October has dug into the ground for the most profound torpor of any mammal. Respiration, circulation, and other bodily functions almost reach a standstill as the little body, rolls in a tight ball and resting on its long clock-spring tail, passes the winter. The jumper does not appear until the following April.

#### LAGOMORPHA (Hares and Rabbits)

The hares and rabbits are superficially like the rodents, with which they have much in common. Parallel development during the course of geologic time has accounted for this similarity. The lagomorphs differ from the rodents in possessing two pairs of upper incisors, the second pair being small, circular and directly behind the large prominent cutting incisors. Rabbits are important mammals, for they supply felt and hides to the hatter and furrier. Millions are killed for sport and food. These animals cause colossal damage to agriculture, especially in the orchard, alfalfa or garden.

Two species occur on Long Island. The New England cottontail or wood rabbit *Sylvilagus transitionalis*, is a small short-eared cottontail with pinkish buff coat heavily washed with black. It may be distinguished from the Eastern Cottontail by its shorter ears and black patch between the ears.

The Eastern or Florida cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus mallurus*, is a large rabbit, with relatively long ears, prominent gray rump patch; the upperparts are dull, rather dark rusty yellowish or buffy washed with black, the nape being rusty. These cottontails weigh three pounds or more and are considered one of the finest of game animals, many millions being shot for food annually. The questionable practice of introducing Western forms to restock the East has led to mixtures which are the nightmare of taxonomists, and the interbreeding of several forms on Long Island poses a question regarding the exact status of the present fauna.

Some years ago my father and I shot rabbits at various points along the North Shore. We found the greatest number in the bayberry thickets and under the shelter of vacant cottages. The sweet music of a well trained beagle gave us a clue to the whereabouts of the rabbit and we had but to wait until the game circled within gunshot distance. Rabbits provide food for a great many animals beside humans, and the constant depredation from birth to senility requires that they produce several litters of five to seven young during the warm months. These are born in a slight hollow, lined with the fur of the mother, and so cleverly concealed with grass that the first intimation of a rabbit's nest is usually the scattered remains, uncovered by a dog. Since rabbits are almost entirely vegetarians, they are capable of considerable destruction. Persistent raids on the vegetable patch and the bark stripping of young fruit trees has warranted their destruction whenever they clash with agricultural interests. The great fecundity of the cottontail places it in no jeopardy of extinction in spite of this persecution.



## ARTIODACTYLA (Deer, Pig, Sheep)

The lone wild representative of this order on Long Island is the Virginia deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*. Little description is needed, as the deer is familiar to all. Forty-five years ago, Helme wrote that the deer is "now restricted to an area about six miles long by four or five in width, situated in the southeastern portion of Islip Township and the southwestern part of Brookhaven township. There it is still plentiful, but doubtless would have long since become only



*A Doe, Part of the Long Island Deer Herd*

a memory of the past, but for the protection afforded on the game preserves of 'the Southside Sportsman's Association', and those of a few private estates. Deer are, however, steadily decreasing in numbers, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, and unless the laws are more rigidly enforced to prevent reckless and indiscriminate slaughter, both in and out of season, these beautiful creatures will soon cease to grace our woodlands."

Fortunately for the naturalist, and less so for the agriculturist, Helme's fears have proved groundless. The Long Island deer herd in Suffolk County numbers between 1500 and 2000 animals at the present time, and the damage to vegetables, principally potatoes, and nursery stock was estimated at \$20,000 during 1945. Deer have increased to the point where they dig up potato nubbins, tear off the growing sprouts of young apples and other fruits, browse back

the growing vegetables and otherwise cause a nuisance of no inconsiderable monetary value. Here we have a splendid native species, once threatened with extinction, which through popular demand has received protection to the extent that, at least in some areas, has become an unmitigated nuisance. Since control by guns is prohibited on Long Island, the deer will undoubtedly increase within a few years, to a point where radical measures must be considered.

Deer mate in early winter, the does normally producing a single or twin fawns in late April. The young remain with the mother until fall, often into the second spring. The young buck may produce a single spike in the year of its birth; not uncommonly an eight-pointer is but two years old. The number of antler points is no criterion of age. As the bucks become senile, the number of points lessens. The deer is a fastidious feeder, browsing on the tender buds and twigs of deciduous shrubs and trees, and feeding on the new growth of many conifers. Winter is the time of hardship for the Adirondack deer, but the amenable climate of Long Island provides access to sufficient food to keep the deer herd in good condition. There is no winter loss, which might otherwise keep the herd within bounds.

The problem of the Long Island deer herd is a vexatious one. Some hold that the deer population can be controlled by the use of the bow and arrow. Others insist that shooting alone is the problem. In a thickly settled area, the latter method may conceivably prove fatal to more humans than deer.





## CHAPTER XXIX

### *Long Island Bird Life\**

Prepared by the BALDWIN BIRD CLUB

and

Edited by EDWIN WAY TEALE

#### INTRODUCTION

Because of the variety of terrain offered by the hills, the plains, the pine woods, the salt marshes, the bays and the outer beaches of Long Island, the area has been noted for the richness of its bird life since the days of the earliest colonists. Daniel Denton, in his book, *A Brief Description of New York, Formerly Called New Netherland*, which was printed in London in 1670, tells of the incredible numbers of ducks and geese and swans that made their home along the south shore of the island. People living close to the ocean, he adds, were disturbed in their sleep by the clamor of the waterfowl.

Although many of the colonists knew little about birds, the literature of the time contains numerous references to the avifauna of the island. The fact that it was one of the earliest sites on the North American continent to be settled has given us records that extend back over a period of more than 300 years. These records sometimes speak of birds now extinct, of the Great Auk, of the Heath Hen, of the Labrador Duck, of the Passenger Pigeon. If we include these vanished species and introduced birds, such as the Starling and the English Sparrow, the total for Long Island is 388 species. The total number for New York State is 412. In other words, every bird that has ever been seen in New York State has also been seen on Long Island with the exception of only twenty-four species.

This surprising total is undoubtedly increased by two factors. One is that two different zoological life zones are found on the island. From approximately Artist's Lake eastward, the Upper Austral life zone prevails. The western half of the island is in the Transition zone. Even the most casual observer cannot help but be struck by the change in the country as he drives the length of the island. This great variety is the explanation for the large number of resident species. In addition, the island is visited by many migrants. Its length is a link in the long chain of the Atlantic Coast flyway.

Each spring and autumn, migrants going to and coming from New England and eastern Canada stop to rest and feed in the area. Furthermore, because the island borders on the sea, hurricanes and

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\* This section of THE HISTORY OF LONG ISLAND was prepared by the Baldwin Bird Club. Edwin Way Teale acted as editor and wrote the Introduction; Mrs. Howard Meinke wrote the two sections on Bird Life of the Past and Bird Life of the Present; Mrs. James Ritchie covered The Conservation of Birds and Miss Lucille Cooper prepared the material on Long Island Bird Clubs.



gales sometimes drive pelagic species inland or bring rare birds, such as the Yellow-billed Tropic Bird, to Long Island.

The normal bird population lives in five distinctly different areas, each area attracting its own characteristic species. Some years ago, John T. Nichols, of the American Museum of Natural History, prepared an excellent summary of the facts about these areas and their relation to Long Island bird life. It was published by the Bird Club of Long Island and is used as the basis of the following paragraphs.

The largest of the five areas is the central and south-shore section which includes the pine barrens of Suffolk County. The Great Horned Owl and the Red-tailed Hawk are two unusual species found in this area. Beyond Babylon, in the region of the pine barrens, the Hermit Thrush builds its nest. This is of particular interest because this is the farthest south the bird is known to nest at sea level.

The second area runs along the Sound on the north shore. Rolling country, hills and tracts of deciduous woodland characterize the region. Terminal moraines, left by the Ice Age and forming the backbone of the island, meet near Manhasset. As this area progresses eastward, it grows steadily narrower until it loses its distinctive ornithological character. Among the birds that nest in this section are the Veery, the Red-shouldered Hawk and the Louisiana Water-Thrush.

Third, we have a small, flat shore area along the ocean near the eastern boundary of Nassau County. At one time, this area was largely covered with deciduous trees. South-bound migrants are especially numerous here in the autumn. The Clapper Rail is one of the species found nesting in this locality.

The fourth area is the well-known Hempstead Plains. Originally, it stretched southward from the hills of the north shore, an area of natural grasslands. In recent years, however, the character of the area has changed considerably. The breaking of the native sod, the cutting of new roads, the development of suburban communities, have played a leading role in this alteration. Weeds and bush growth have replaced the extensive sod of former days. Interesting birds, nevertheless, are encountered in the area. The Grasshopper Sparrow is particularly numerous in summer, while the Pipit appears in fall and the Horned Larks in winter.

The fifth, and final, area comprises the far eastern end of the island, the Montauk and Orient peninsulas. It has an ornithological character of its own. Here, oceanic birds can be seen, birds like Puffins, Gannets and Cory's Shearwater.

In these five areas, each with its own distinctive forms of bird life, the individual species often has increased or decreased in numbers as the years have passed. The common Herring Gull, for example, is now familiar everywhere along the ocean shore. Yet, in 1900, it was so rare that one ornithologist estimated that there were no more than 2000 nesting pairs on the whole Atlantic coast.

Some of the records which tell the story of changing bird life on Long Island were written by such celebrated ornithologists as John James Audubon and Alexander Wilson; others by such enthu-

siastic amateur bird-watchers as Theodore Roosevelt. The years have seen a shift in emphasis; a wholesome change in our attitude toward the birds. Appreciation has replaced exploitation. Where once there were only shotguns, now there are field glasses; where once there were only hunters, now there are bird-students. Sanctuaries have increased. The story of this change, and the birds that it has affected, will be told in the following pages.

EDWIN WAY TEALE.

#### BIRD LIFE OF THE PAST

IN EARLY colonial times the broad beaches of Long Island were inhabited by vast colonies of terns, gulls and large numbers of shore birds of many kinds. The Swedish botanist, Peter Kalm, traveling in America in 1749, writes of Long Island, "The soil of the south part is very poor, but this deficiency is made up by a vast quantity of oysters, lobsters, crabs, fish and numbers of waterfowl. All of which are far more abundant than on the north shore of the Island." Elon Howard Eaton in his *Birds of New York State* writes of these early days, "When the state was first settled, waterfowl fairly swarmed our bays, rivers and lakes and shore birds flocked by thousands every Spring and Fall on Long Island." Another early account describes the extended south bays as being "the common resort of innumerable multitudes of wildfowl from stately Goose down to the smallest Snipe". An old-time resident, DeVries, describing the country of New Netherland in 1639-42 in his Journal mentions swans, geese and white cranes with the ducks on New York Bay.

It would seem that pelicans were to be found here also at that time, for on a Coast Guard Survey Chart of the year 1835 there is a body of land, now sunk beneath the waves, off Coney Island designated as Pelican Beach. Beautiful white egrets, herons, woodcock and the favorite bird of the Indian, the American Bittern, enjoyed the secret wet retreats of the vast undisturbed coastal marshes.

The forests, stretching unbroken from the marshes to the prairies, were full of Wild Turkey and Pigeons in season. DeVries tells of shooting a thirty-pound turkey near New Amsterdam. Daniel Denton, son of the learned Reverend Richard Denton, pastor of Hempstead, in his *Brief Description of New York*, published in 1670, says: "The greatest part of the Island is full of timber. There are divers sorts of singing birds whose chirping notes salute the ears of Travellers with harmonious discord." Secretary Van Tienhoven in 1649 describes Montauk Point as entirely covered with trees. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were presumably generally distributed. According to an old account, "The woods as well as the open fields abound with Quails and Partridges." On the plains also were grouse, plover and Heath Hen.

Into the richness of Long Island's bird life came the English ornithologist, Blackburn, to spend the year 1773 at Hempstead. The large collections which he made added many new species to Pennant's *Arctic Zoology*, then being prepared.



We have a vivid picture of Long Island's beautiful natural abundance in those early days from the glowing accounts which have been preserved. We share the excitement of discovery of the Hollander who, seeing his first owl, wrote from New Netherland in 1656 of a "bird of prey which has a head like the head of a large cat and its feathers are a light ash colour". He also wrote of "another small curious bird or a large West India bee. It seeks its nourishment from flowers regaling itself. It is only seen in Nieuw Nederlandt in season of flowers. In flying they also make a humming noise like bees. They



(Photo by Edwin Way Teale)

#### *Young Screech Owls*

are very tender and cannot well be kept alive, but we preserve them between paper, dry them in the sun and send them as presents to our friends". The Humming-bird was a source of wonder also to William Wood, who wrote: "The Humbird is one of the wonders of the country, being no bigger than a Hornet, yet having all the Dimensions of a Bird, as bill and wings with quills, spider-like legges, small claws. For color she is glorious as the Rainebow."

Our exact knowledge of the bird-fauna of this region at that time, however, is small. The work of Giraud and his friends on Long Island, about a hundred years ago, marks the beginning of our ornithological history. Mr. J. P. Giraud, a naturalist, a member of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York, occupied the carpenter and wheelwright shop of George Smith at

Raynortown (Freeport) in the early 1800s for the purpose of collecting natural history specimens and especially birds of Long Island. Wiley and Putnam published his *Birds of Long Island* in 1844. His ornithological collection was finally presented to Vassar College. Giraud gives the following enthusiastic description of Long Island's bird life at that time:

"The occurrence on Long Island of many species that are rarely or never observed in other parts of the middle districts, will doubtless appear somewhat remarkable to those who are unacquainted with the locality; but when they examine the map and find that this lengthy and comparatively narrow island extends some distance into the ocean nearly at right angles with the southern portion of the coast of the United States comprising within its boundaries numerous

bays, inlets, shoals and bars, abounding with all the varieties of food peculiar to almost every species of marine birds, it will not seem surprising that those species which are more abundant in the higher as well as the more temperate latitudes should in their wanderings, visit these hospitable shores. Not only is our section the resort for nearly every species of water bird found within the limits of the United States, but out of more than 500 birds now ascertained to belong to North America 286 have been known to visit this far famed island. Indeed, no portion of our country, of the same extent, is richer in resources for the student of Natural History, or more inviting to the sportsman, than this garden of the middle districts."

John James Audubon, the famous naturalist and artist, no doubt gave some attention to Long Island's shore birds at some time during these years. The winter of 1806-7 Audubon spent in New York, so his biographer, Francis Hobart Herrick, states, and paid most attention to the waterfowl, frequently visiting the shore and the markets for his subjects. Although no special mention is made of Long Island, it is probable that at that time he studied some birds of this region.

At least one of Long Island's birds has been immortalized by this great artist. In his *Birds of America*, writing on the Curlew Sandpiper, Audubon states, "In the course of my extensive rambles along our coasts and in the interior, I have seen only three birds of this species, all of which I have kept with care, considering the Cape Sandpiper or Pigmy Curlew as the rarest of its genus with us. It appears to resort to two particular districts. Two of my birds were shot at Great Egg Harbour in New Jersey in the spring of 1829, the other on Long Island near Sandy Hook. The one killed on Long Island was a fine male in full plumage and from it I made the figure which has been engraved in the plate."

Of the Clapper Rail Audubon writes: "Few if any ever go beyond Long Island in the State of New York. At least I have never seen or heard of one farther east." He speaks of the Black-necked Stilt as being "not abundant in any part of the United States and is seldom seen to the eastward beyond Long Island".

As is often the case in looking back over history, at the time when certain conditions are at a peak, circumstances which lead to changes are discernible. So it was during this period so glowingly described by Giraud that the disappearance of the remnants of the original forest, the large scale market hunting, the demands of the millinery trade and the popularity of many smaller birds as cage pets, were already bringing about inevitable changes in Long Island bird life. Some of the birds found in colonial times had already become extinct in this region. The Wild Turkey, once apparently abundant, had disappeared long before the days of our early ornithologists. The Whooping, "the White Crane" of DeVries' day, had evidently become extirpated by 1800 as it was unknown to both Giraud and DeKay, a naturalist who also studied Long Island's wild life at



that time. Giraud's introduction to his book is significant. He offered the volume "with a view of placing within the reach of 'gunner's' the means of becoming more thoroughly acquainted with the birds frequenting Long Island."

Already Giraud speaks of the Heath Hen as being nearly if not entirely extinct. He reports that although the Heath Hen was abundant thirty years before on the bushy plains in Suffolk County, on a recent expedition over its former favorite haunts he could find no trace of it. It had been a favorite bird with sportsmen and commanded a high price on the New York market.

Of the Red-headed Woodpecker, Giraud notes that though formerly one of our most common Woodpeckers, it was not as abundant as it had been a few years before. A Colonel Nicolas Pike, a resident of Kings County in the 1800s who was an accurate field naturalist as well as a successful sportsman, told of seeing Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers in a large tract of forest running eastward from Flatbush Road before the outskirts of Brooklyn reached that area. The last specimen of the Pileated Woodpecker was reported taken on Long Island in 1879.

The magnificent Bald Eagle was abundant on Long Island during the winters at this time, sixty to seventy being shot in one season. John Lion Gardiner, proprietor of Gardiner's Island in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, in his journals, in which he writes in some detail about the birds on Gardiner's Island, tells of seeing an eagle soar away with a whole live sheep in his talons. Hundreds of Ospreys were nesting on Gardiner's Island at this time. The well-known ornithologist, Alexander Wilson, included a study of the Fish Hawks there in his writing. The Gardiner of that day estimated the number of nests to be about 300. In 1904, J. Lyon Gardiner said the birds were slowly diminishing and he thought that then there were about 200 Ospreys nesting on the Island.

In speaking of the now extinct Passenger Pigeon, whose rate of flight was estimated at a mile a minute, Giraud tells of accounts related to him by shipmasters who had occasionally seen large flocks drifting about at sea. It was believed that they had either lost their way or been driven about at sea, and becoming fatigued had alighted on the water and perished. Colonel Pike tells of seeing thousands of these birds within the present city limits of Brooklyn. Around 1840, there was a large thickly wooded hill near Second Place, at that time out of town and with few houses between it and City Hall. Sportsmen would gather here to shoot the Pigeons which would pause to rest in the trees on this hill before crossing the Narrows below. Colonel Pike, who since 1830 had been making a collection of specimens of Long Island birds, shot a Passenger Pigeon for his collection in about 1878. That was the last one he ever saw. He regretted having shot it. After 1874 the black and white Labrador Duck was no longer seen on the waters of Long Island Sound where it had been fairly common during the winters.

The period of greatest abundance of birds on Long Island is considered to have come to a close about 1885. During these years, how-

ever, new species were being added to Long Island's list, such as the Cliff Swallow of whose occurrence on Long Island, Giraud states, there was no knowledge previous to 1842.

In a paper read before the Linnaean Society of New York on March 8, four days before the great Blizzard of 1888, William Dutcher reported six new species and subspecies which he had added to Long Island's list of birds. Three of these, the Little Gull, Cory's Shearwater and the Prothonotary Warbler were new records for the State of New York. The Little Gull was also the first positive record for this continent. The other two birds were the Prairie Horned Lark and the Palm Warbler.

Mr. Dutcher, who in 1905 became President of the National Association of Audubon Societies, followed Giraud in concentrating on Long Island in his ornithological studies. Mr. Dutcher writes in 1888, "Concentration of effort, whether applied to business pursuits or the study of zoology is the surest road to success. It was, therefore, with this idea in view that I decided many years since to confine my ornithological studies and collecting to a limited area. Having a natural bent toward the seashore and waterfowl, I saw, presented on Long Island a field that could not be equalled for diversity of topography and definiteness of surroundings. Situated as it is on the debatable line between the Alleghanian and Carolinian Faunae, it is like the territory between two contending armies, subject to incursions from both parties. Stragglers from the icy north visit its shores that shortly before have been visited by wanderers from the tropics. Upland and marsh and sea attract a numerous and diversified avifauna, larger probably than can be found in any territory of equal size on the continent."

Mr. Dutcher's account of the first recording of the Palm Warbler on the Island calls our attention to those outposts of our shores, the lighthouses, which have played such a large part in the observing and recording of the birds flying over Long Island. Mr. Dutcher records that during the night of September 23, 1887, a great bird wave was rolling southward along the Atlantic coast. Mr. E. J. Udall, first assistant keeper of the Fire Island Light, said that the air was full of birds. Many of them unfortunately met their death by striking the light. The following morning Mr. Udall picked up no less than 595 victims at the foot of the tower. He shipped them to Mr. Dutcher who identified them, finding twenty-five species included, all land birds, nearly half of which were wood warblers.

The Bureau of Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture used these strategic locations in exhaustive studies of bird migration. It became one of the duties of the lighthouse keeper to make an examination outside the lighthouse daily for the purpose of noting and recording the number of birds killed. If the bird was not known it was sent to Washington to be identified.

The keeper of the Montauk Light has always had a grandstand seat, as it were, for observing the birds traveling north and south as well as those that lingered on this isolated tip. Montauk Point has always been rich in bird life, especially in the days before the railroad and



building developments reached that far. Capt. James G. Scott, keeper of the light from 1885 to 1911, was keenly interested in birds and kept a daily record of those he saw and in what numbers.

In the old days at Montauk, men went gunning the year round, even at night. In November, 1902, Captain Scott writes of the great quantities of ducks in Great Pond, "mostly Red Heads and Widgeon, some Mallard or English Ducks and Geese and about thirty gunners



(Photo by Edwin Way Teale)

*Red Breasted Merganser (female)*

every day staying at Conklin's Third House". Captain Scott records Golden Plover: "Aug. 23, 1893, saw three flocks; Oct. 9, 1894, saw one Golden Plover in Oyster Pond; Sept. 15, 1903, saw flock Golden Plover, about fifty". Compare this with Robert B. Roosevelt's earlier account of the Golden Plover in his chapter on Montauk Point in his *Game Birds of the Coasts and Lakes of the Northern States of America*, published in 1866. "When suddenly, as we surmount one of the swelling eminences which are the prevailing feature of this district of country, we come upon a sight such as perhaps but few sportsmen have ever beheld. A gentle hollow spreads before us for several acres, literally covered with the ranks of the much desired the matchless Golden Plover." He and his companion computed the number to be not less than 3000. Montauk has yielded specimens of



many of the rare birds now included in the various ornithological collections of this country.

The Long Island Historical Society, organized in 1863, instituted a Natural History Department soon after it was established with Mr. Elias Lewis, Jr., acting as curator. A fine collection of Long Island birds was made which later was given to the Brooklyn Museum. The nucleus of this collection was that begun by Colonel Pike in 1830. Many of the birds were obtained in Kings County, at that time largely woods and farm lands. A large number of game birds and many rare species were brought by professional hunters to Fulton Market, the depot for the sale of produce from Long Island. Mr. Akhurst, Brooklyn taxidermist who mounted many of the birds, would visit the market early in the morning hoping to find some new and strange specimen. He procured many birds from a market man known as Old Jake who, traveling twice a week from Babylon to Brooklyn, would bring him whatever he secured during his trips along the south shore. Local gunners, of whom there were many in Brooklyn, also brought rarities to Mr. Akhurst.

Further records of birds at this western end of Long Island at this time are found in Franklin Benner's *Bird Notes from Long Island* in an 1878 issue of *Forest and Stream*. Mr. Benner tells of the many birds nesting in Astoria within a mile of the ferry landing. He lists the White-eyed Vireo as being common there and says that every piece of woods contains a nest or two of the Green Heron. But the Black-crowned Night Heron, abundant there five or six years before, was rapidly leaving as docks were being built on their nesting grounds. Yellow Warblers, Maryland Yellow-throats, Least Flycatchers and Wood Thrush were found there with the Robins, Catbirds, orioles and various types of sparrows. But Mr. Benner complains that "the woods in Fall are overrun by pseudo-sportsmen, who shoot anything and everything—Robins, Sparrows, Warblers. The local destruction of all the small birds and songsters is getting to be intolerable."

An enthusiastic observer of Long Island bird life in those days was Theodore Roosevelt. Indeed, the first work which he had published while yet a young man, in March, 1879, was a pamphlet giving notes on some of the birds of Oyster Bay. Many of the specimens of birds, among them a Passenger Pigeon, obtained by Mr. Roosevelt in this area are included in the ornithological collection of the United States National Museum in Washington, D. C. In his *Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter*, written in 1905, Roosevelt expresses the opinion that although there had been a lamentable decrease in the shore birds which used to flock along the southern shore in the last thirty years, he thought there was no diminution of small bird life. "In northern Long Island in the neighborhood of my own home, birds taken as a whole, are quite as plentiful as they were when I was a boy. There are one or two species which have decreased in number. Notably the Woodcock; while the Passenger Pigeon, which was then a rarely seen straggler, does not now appear at all. Bob-whites are less plentiful. On the other hand, some birds have certainly increased



in numbers. This is true, for instance, of the conspicuously beautiful and showy Scarlet Tanager. I think Meadow-larks are rather more plentiful than they were, and Wrens less so. Bluebirds have never been common with us, but are now rather more common than formerly. It seems to me as if the Chickadees are more numerous than formerly. Purple Grackles are more plentiful than when I was a boy, and the far more attractive Red-wing Blackbirds less so. But these may all be, and doubtless must be, purely local changes, which apply only to our immediate neighborhood. As regards most of the birds, it would be hard to say that there has been any change. Of course, obvious local causes will now and then account for a partial change. Thus while the Little Green Herons are quite as plentiful as formerly in our immediate neighborhood, the Black-crowned Night Herons are not as plentiful, because they abandoned their big heronry on Lloyds Neck upon the erection of a sandmill close by. The only ducks which are now or at any time during the last thirty years have been abundant in our neighborhood are the Surf Ducks or Scoters and the Old Squaws."

In the preface to his book, *Birds of the New York City Region*, which included Long Island, published in 1923, Ludlow Griscom, then Assistant Curator of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History, points out that with the increase of active bird students in all sections, a mass of records has been gathered so that our knowledge of our birds, their status and distribution has greatly increased. A change in attitude toward birds is also indicated by Griscom's comment, "Bearing in mind, however, the fact that the majority of bird lovers now happily use the glass instead of the gun, the problem of identifying birds in life has largely replaced the problem of how to get near enough to kill them."

In recent years much constructive work in the study of birds and their wanderings has been carried on at the Bird Banding Station at Elnahurst, Long Island, sponsored by the Audubon Society and carried on by Marie V. Beals and J. T. Nichols. For eleven years, from 1929 through 1939, records of the thousands of birds banded there together with records of hundreds of these same birds as they were recovered elsewhere were analyzed and reported to the United States Bureau of Biological Survey.

With the passing of the years, Long Island's list of birds has grown and new nesting records have been made. Griscom considered the Yellow-crowned Night Heron a casual visitant from the south and knew of but eight records of its occurrence. Allan D. Cruickshank, in his *Birds Around New York City*, published in 1942, expresses the belief that the first breeding record of this Heron in New York State was that made by him of twelve pairs nesting in a swamp near Massapequa in 1938. A nest with three eggs was found in Great Neck in May, 1941. Today it is suspected that this species breeds farther east on Long Island also. Dozens of sight records are turned in annually, the number increasing each year.

The discovery of the Black Skimmer nesting on Gilgo Island in Great South Bay was one of the local ornithological highlights of 1934.

There are now three nesting colonies on the south shore of Long Island with a total population of at least forty pairs and it is believed that the breeding birds will increase and spread.

In July, 1940, what appears to be the first unquestionable record of the Coot nesting on Long Island was made when a pair of adults with five young were observed at Mill Creek Sanctuary, near Oyster Bay.

The first definite Long Island breeding record for the Prairie Horned Lark was made in May, 1936, when a nest and four eggs were found by John Mayer at Idlewild, near Jamaica Bay. When Henshaw first differentiated this lark in 1884 he gave its habitat as the Upper Mississippi Valley and the region of the Great Lakes. He says in an early issue of *The Auk*: "In connection with this race it is interesting to note that it appears to be gradually extending its range and to be encroaching on territory which by reason of recent deforestation has been made to approach the conditions this prairie loving species seeks." Mrs. Gertrude Selby, of Baldwin, in a paper on this species published by the Bird Club of Long Island records it breeding along the Meadowbrook Causeway since 1937. The number of species of birds found on Long Island has thus increased until it now totals better than one hundred more than Giraud recorded in 1843.

#### BIRD LIFE OF THE PRESENT

In all the territory of North America lying north of the Rio Grande there have been recorded about 800 distinct species of wild birds and about 400 additional sub-species or climatic varieties. New York State has recorded 412 of these 1200 species and sub-species, holding fourth place in the Union with the large states of Texas, California and Nebraska topping the list. Of New York's 412 species, 388 have been recorded on Long Island. Of this number 138 are known to nest on Long Island.

Thirty-seven of these nesting species are present on Long Island throughout the year. These permanent residents are:

Mute Swan	Flicker
Mallard	Downy Woodpecker
Common Black Duck	Hairy Woodpecker
Bald Eagle	Prairie Horned Lark
Cooper's Hawk	Blue Jay
Marsh Hawk	Common Crow
Red-tailed Hawk	Fish Crow
Sparrow Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee
Ruffed Grouse	White-breasted Nuthatch
Bob-white	Carolina Wren
Ring-necked Pheasant	Starling
Herring Gull	Eastern Meadowlark
Mourning Dove	Cardinal
Barn Owl	Purple Finch
Horned Owl	Eastern Goldfinch
Long-eared Owl	European Goldfinch
Screech Owl	House Sparrow
Short-eared Owl	Song Sparrow



The Bald Eagle bred on Gardiner's Island until 1930, and it is thought that at least one pair is still breeding in eastern Suffolk County.

Summer visitants, that is, those birds that are absent from Long Island for some period during the winter, are listed below in order of their arrival. Since the majority of these birds nest on Long Island, attention will be called to those for which there is no nesting record in this region.

Arriving from February 20 to March 10:

Killdeer	Cedar Waxwing
Woodcock	Red-winged Blackbird
Robin	Purple Grackle
Bluebird	

An occasional Robin or Bluebird will stay in this region throughout the winter.

Arriving from March 11 to 31:

Black-crowned Night Heron	Tree Swallow
Wood Duck	Hermit Thrush
Red-shouldered Hawk	Pine Warbler
Osprey	Cowbird
Piping Plover	Field Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Vesper Sparrow
Phoebe	

In 1935 there was estimated to be a population of over 3000 pairs of Black-crowned Night Herons in twenty known heronries on Long Island. A few of these heronries have been reduced or destroyed, but three new ones have been discovered, and the known breeding population remains about the same.

Arriving from April 1 to 20:

Pied-billed Grebe	Barn Swallow
Green Heron	Rough-winged Swallow
Little Blue Heron	Purple Martin
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Brown Thrasher
American Bittern	Black and White Warbler
Clapper Rail	Louisiana Water-Thrush
King Rail	Red-eyed Towhee
Virginia Rail	Chipping Sparrow
Florida Gallinule	Henslow's Sparrow
Upland Plover	Savannah Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Swamp Sparrow
Whip-poor-will	

The Little Blue Heron is not known to nest on Long Island. Twenty years ago it was considered a rare visitant. Today it is a fairly common summer visitant both on our coastal marshes and the fresh water marshes inland.

Arriving after April 20, mostly in May:

Cory's Shearwater	Catbird
Greater Shearwater	Wood Thrush
Sooty Shearwater	Veery
Wilson's Petrel	White-eyed Vireo
American Egret	Yellow-throated Vireo
Snowy Egret	Red-eyed Vireo
Least Bittern	Warbling Vireo
Broad-winged Hawk	Black-throated Green Warbler
Black Rail	Blue-winged Warbler
Laughing Gull	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Common Tern	Lawrence's Warbler
Least Tern	Prairie Warbler
Roseate Tern	Worm-eating Warbler
Black Skimmer	Yellow Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Ovenbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Maryland Yellow-throat
Nighthawk	Yellow-breasted Chat
Chimney Swift	Redstart
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Bobolink
Kingbird	Orchard Oriole
Crested Flycatcher	Baltimore Oriole
Acadian Flycatcher	Scarlet Tanager
Least Flycatcher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Wood Pewee	Indigo Bunting
Bank Swallow	Grasshopper Sparrow
House Wren	Seaside Sparrow
Long-billed Marsh Wren	Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Short-billed Marsh Wren	

The Shearwaters, Petrel and Laughing Gulls do not nest on Long Island. Nor do the Egrets, although these birds, now protected by law, are steadily increasing in numbers. It is felt that the Snowy Egret, which at one time did nest in this region, may again establish itself as a breeding bird on Long Island.

Late Fall and Winter visitants, for the most part absent in the Summer, are listed below in order of their arrival. Since only a few of these birds nest on Long Island, the ones that breed in this region will be noted.

Arriving in August:

Common Loon	Green-winged Teal
Baldpate	Ring-billed Gull
Gadwall	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Pintail	

There is one breeding record of the Red-breasted Nuthatch. It was reported by Roy Latham, of Orient, L. I., on June 15, 1921.



## Arriving in September:

Red-throated Loon	European Widgeon
Horned Grebe	Duck Hawk
European Cormorant	Coot
Canvas back	Great Black-backed Gull
Greater Scaup Duck	Brown Creeper
Redhead	Winter Wren
Shoveller	Golden-crowned Kinglet
American Scoter	Myrtle Warbler
Surf Scoter	Slate-colored Junco
White-winged Scoter	White-throated Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	

Ludlow Griscom states in his *Modern Bird Study*, published by the Harvard University Press in 1945, that the Great Black-backed Gull is becoming a more common winter visitant and that it has been known to raise young on Long Island.

## Arriving in October:

Holboell's Grebe	European Teal
Whistling Swan	Gyr Falcon
Brant	Goshawk
Blue Goose	Rough-legged Hawk
Canada Goose	Bonaparte's Gull
Greater Snow Goose	Saw-whet Owl
Buffle-head	Northern Horned Lark
Lesser Scaup Duck	Pine Siskin
Old-squaw	Red Crossbill
Ring-necked Duck	Ipswich Sparrow
Red-legged Black Duck	Tree Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Lapland Longspur
Hooded Merganser	Snow Bunting

Although the Whistling Swan was apparently a regular transient visitant in colonial times, in 1923 Griscom listed only four definite records for Long Island. Although now on the increase, this species is still uncommon in this region, the normal flight line passing just west of Long Island. Tame Canada Geese escaping from sanctuaries and parks from time to time are found breeding in the wild with increasing success, as are Mute Swans and Mallards. The Saw-whet Owl, smallest of our eastern Owls, nests on Long Island.

## Arriving in November or later:

American Eider Duck	Razor-billed Awk
American Golden-eye	Atlantic Murre
Harlequin Duck	Brunnich's Murre
King Eider	Dovekie
American Merganser	Black Guillemot
Purple Sandpiper	Snowy Owl
Glaucous Gull	Northern Shrike
Iceland Gull	Evening Grosbeak
Kittiwake	Redpoll
Kumlien's Gull	

Migrating birds normally present on Long Island twice a year in their flights northward and southward are as follows:

Water Birds:

Leach's Petrel	Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Gannet	Red-backed Sandpiper
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Willet
Great Blue Heron	Western Willet
Blue-winged Teal	Greater Yellow-legs
Sora	Lesser Yellow-legs
Yellow Rail	Knot
Semipalmated Plover	Eastern Dowitcher
Black-bellied Plover	Long-billed Dowitcher
Golden Plover	Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone	Hudsonian Godwit
Wilson's Snipe	Sanderling
Hudsonian Curlew	Northern Phalarope
Least Sandpiper	Red Phalarope
Pectoral Sandpiper	Wilson's Phalarope
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Pomarine Jaeger
Solitary Sandpiper	Parasitic Jaeger
Western Sandpiper	Black Tern
Stilt Sandpiper	Caspian Tern
White-rumped Sandpiper	Forster's Tern
Baird's Sandpiper	

Land Birds:

Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Pigeon Hawk	Brewster's Warbler
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Canada Warbler
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cape May Warbler
Alder Flycatcher	Connecticut Warbler
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Golden-winged Warbler
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler
Cliff Swallow	Magnolia Warbler
Mockingbird	Mourning Warbler
Bicknell's Thrush	Nashville Warbler
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Orange-crowned Warbler
Olive-backed Thrush	Parula Warbler
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Tennessee Warbler
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Western Palm Warbler
Pipit	Wilson's Warbler
Migrant Shrike	Northern Water-Thrush
Blue-headed Vireo	Fox Sparrow
Philadelphia Vireo	Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Yellow Palm Warbler	Lincoln's Sparrow
Bay-breasted Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
Blackburnian Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Black-poll Warbler	Bronzed Grackle



The following species have been recorded on Long Island, but they are of more or less fortuitous occurrence and are considered as casual or accidental visitants:

Pacific Loon	Ivory Gull
Eared Grebe	Little Gull
Western Grebe	Sabine's Gull
Audubon's Shearwater	Arctic Tern
Manx Shearwater	Gull-billed Tern
Mediterranean Shearwater	Royal Tern
Fulmar	Sooty Tern
Black-capped Petrel	Puffin
Yellow-billed Tropic-bird	Barred Owl
Brown Pelican	Great Gray Owl
White Pelican	Hawk Owl
White-bellied Booby	Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker
Man-o-War Bird	American Three-toed Woodpecker
Louisiana Heron.	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Glossy Ibis	Arkansas Kingbird
White Ibis	Gray Kingbird
Wood Ibis	Say's Phoebe
Black Brant	Northern Raven
Barnacle Goose	Acadian Chickadee
Hutchin's Goose	Tufted Titmouse
Lesser Snow Goose	Varied Thrush
White-fronted Goose	Greenland Wheatear
Barrow's Golden-eye	Townsend's Solitaire
Rufous-crested Duck	Bohemian Waxwing
Black Vulture	Cerulean Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Kentucky Warbler
Swallow-tailed Kite	Prothonotary Warbler
Golden Eagle	Yellow-throated Warbler
Dusky Pheasant	Grinnell's Water-thrush
Corn Crake	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Purple Gallinule	Summer Tanager
Oyster-catcher	Blue Grosbeak
Lapwing	Pine Grosbeak
Wilson's Plover	Greater Redpoll
Eskimo Curlew	Holboell's Redpoll
European Curlew	Lark Bunting
Long-billed Curlew	Dickcissel
European Dunlin	Newfoundland Crossbill
Ruff	White-winged Crossbill
Whimbrel	Baird's Sparrow
Curlew Sandpiper	Clay-colored Sparrow
Avocet	Labrador Savannah Sparrow
Black-necked Stilt	Lark Sparrow
Long-tailed Jaeger	Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Northern Skua	Chestnut-collared Longspur
Black-headed Gull	

An interesting phase of Long Island bird life has been the introduction of species foreign to these shores. These birds, however, have not always been successful in adapting themselves to the conditions existing in this locality.

Such is the case of the European Skylark. It seemed at first as though this lovely songster would be able to establish itself as a permanent resident. William Dutcher, in the *Auk Magazine* for April, 1888, tells of having received a request late in June, 1887, to investigate a statement made in a New York paper that "skylarks are abundant on Long Island at Flatbush and from that place down easterly through a stretch of land extending to Flatlands and thence round and about the town of Flatlands". Mr. Dutcher referred the request to a Mr. Alfred Marshall who resided at Flatlands and was well acquainted with the region. Within two days Mr. Dutcher received two birds which were positively identified as true European Skylarks. Mr. Marshall saw many of them in the long grass fields and on July 14th found a nest with young. They remained until September when he saw the last one. But the European Skylark was evidently unable to adapt itself to the development of that section. It has not been observed on Long Island since 1913.

More successful are our present-day Pheasants, descendants of several introduced species in which the Asiatic races with the white ring on the neck predominate. The birds have bred very successfully in the wild state.

The colorful little European Goldfinch, introduced more recently, is doing well. Brought into New Jersey in 1878, this beautiful bird first appeared on Long Island at Massapequa around 1910 and since that date has persisted. Seven communities of Nassau County have recorded nests of this species.

All too successful are the Starling and the English Sparrow. It is somewhat difficult now to realize that these ubiquitous birds had some little difficulty in establishing themselves at first.

There were several unsuccessful attempts to introduce the Starling before 1890-1891 when one hundred birds liberated in Central Park by a wealthy New York bird fancier, Mr. Eugene Shieffelin, survived. After that date the increase was rapid.

As for the English or House Sparrow, eight pairs of these European Weaver Finches were liberated in Brooklyn in 1850, but did not thrive. In 1852 a larger number were brought over and kept in confinement throughout the winter. Those that survived were liberated in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn. These birds, thriving, multiplied and spread. With the displacement of the horse by the automobile there has been a definite decrease in this sparrow, but it is still very common.

The introduction of the Starling and the English Sparrow has had an unanticipated disastrous effect upon our native bird population. Our own lovely Bluebird cannot cope successfully with the aggressive Starling in claiming and maintaining possession of a suitable homesite. This gentle bird has decreased greatly on Long Island, having almost disappeared from Queens and Nassau Counties.



The Purple Martin has also been on the decline since these birds have come to Long Island. There are now known to be about fourteen colonies in Suffolk County and one at Seaford in Nassau County. Every effort should be made to encourage this swallow and to guard against its extirpation on Long Island.

The decline of the Cliff Swallow is attributed to its inability to withstand the attacks of the English Sparrow both on itself and on its nest. The Cliff Swallow has not been known to nest on Long Island since 1904.

In contrast to the success of the aggressive birds from across the ocean, some of our native American birds, such as the Carolina Wren, have a difficult struggle on Long Island. Periodic severe winters play havoc with their numbers. After a period of great abundance in 1911, the record-breaking winter of 1917-18 almost exterminated this southern Wren from the region. Returning gradually, the species was reduced again in 1933-34 and is once more endeavoring to re-establish itself.

Fluctuation in our bird population is sometimes caused by a failure of food supply as in the case of the American Brant, which was a regular winter resident on the coast of Long Island until 1931 when the eelgrass, its principal food in this region, was struck by a blight and virtually disappeared. This small goose immediately became increasingly rare for the next ten years. Some beds of eelgrass are showing signs of recuperation and the Brant is increasing slowly. Flocks of from three to five thousand Brant were observed feeding on the eelgrass in the waters off Merrick during the latter part of the winter of 1945-46.

Sometimes the disappearance of a favorite nesting material has driven a bird away as happened in the case of the Parula Warbler. This lovely little bird was at one time a common local summer resident over the eastern half of Long Island. It left this area upon the disappearance of the Usnea lichen in the long gray strands of which it liked to build its nest. The last breeding record on Long Island was in 1938.

There are cases too where a failure of food supply elsewhere brings birds to our shore. So it is with the Snowy Owl, usually an irregular visitant from the Arctic. There are years occurring at intervals when, the food supply in the far north running low, these birds invade our shores in numbers. Such an invasion occurred in the winter of 1945-46, when as many as seven Snowy Owls were seen on the sand dunes of Jones Beach in one day.

In considering the changes in our bird population we note that there are some birds which are erratic in their movements with no obvious causes. The Red Crossbill is one of these. There have been winters when Red Crossbills have been on Long Island in considerable numbers. The last such invasion was in 1899-1900. Since then they have been very rare.

The disappearance of the Dickcissel westward by the end of the nineteenth century has never been explained. It had formerly been a summer resident, breeding on Long Island since 1842. There have been

an increasing number of records in the east in the last few years and it is possible that the Dickcissel might return to this region as unaccountably as it left.

The beautiful Evening Grosbeak has extended its winter range eastward. Before the phenomenal invasion of 1890 this Northwestern Finch was virtually unknown in the East. Usually rare on Long Island, it was observed in large numbers during the winter of 1945-46. As many as eighty at one time were seen at the Baldwin Bird Club's feeding station.

On November 13, 1933, there was a remarkable flight of Greater Snow Geese with flocks up to 700 reported at widely separated points on Long Island. Since then this species has been reported regularly but in smaller flocks.

The numbers of some birds visiting Long Island fluctuate at regular intervals. The Saw-whet Owl is one of these. Although the Saw-whet does nest on Long Island, it is in general an irregular winter visitant. Three out of five years there are light flights and once in five, marked invasions.

Man is responsible for the most drastic changes in the bird life of Long Island. His thoughtless slaughter in those early days of abundance wrought havoc which has never been wholly repaired. The Labrador Duck, Heath Hen and Passenger Pigeon are now extinct as the Carolina Paroquet probably is also. The Wild Turkey, Whooping Crane, Eskimo Curlew and Black-necked Stilt have not occurred in our region for many years. By the latter part of the nineteenth century many of our shore birds, waterfowl and game birds were in danger of extirpation from overshooting.

In the development of man's civilization, whole forests have been cut down and sometimes inadvertently burned. The birds that made their homes in these woodlands, such as the thrush, have had to seek suitable habitat elsewhere or confine themselves to the small tracts of woodland remaining in the area. Much of the open plains have been built upon or farmed. When swamps and marsh lands are drained and filled in the bittern, rail, heron and Red-winged Blackbird are driven off.

Railroads and highways have been cut through the length of the island. Its western end has become urban in character with the suburbs stretching ever farther eastward. The practice of chopping off dead limbs and cutting down trees that have died has driven many birds from our towns and parks. Woodpeckers with their strong chisel-shaped bills excavate cavities for their nests. These are used later by other hole-nesting birds. Woodpeckers will rarely attempt to dig a nesting hole in a living tree so that when dead trees are cut down the woodpeckers move on to more natural conditions. With even the natural holes in trees so often filled with cement, the weaker-billed hole-nesting species must move along also.

Summer resorts and beach developments have further added to the bewildering changes to which the birds must adapt themselves through all the length and breadth of Long Island. With the widespread use of automobiles and boats there are few places indeed undisturbed by



man. Timid birds, whose first acquaintance with man has not been such as to engender confidence, are driven off by fear even when they, their nests and young are not actually molested.

But although there is a great contrast between cement streets and primeval forest, most of Long Island may be considered a half-way compromise which the majority of our birds are accepting. Ornithologists are of the opinion that, while definite historical evidence is lacking, it is very probable that many species, including those which may be called farm-land birds such as the native sparrows, warblers, wrens and orioles and other common insectivorous birds such as the Robin, are more abundant today than 250 years ago. In the sharp struggle for existence in a suddenly changed environment the failures disappear and the successful ones flourish.

In the last thirty years as a result of wise laws and educational propaganda there has been a gratifying increase in many of our waterfowl, shore birds and game birds. The Piping Plover, once in danger of extirpation, is now one of the common summer birds of the outer beaches. The Upland Plover of the open plains and extensive meadows, though still very rare, has returned as a breeding species in several localities. The Purple Sandpiper has shown a marked increase in the last twenty years. Although the Laughing Gull has not been known to nest on Long Island since 1888, it also has increased in the last twenty years and it is now fairly common, spring and fall, on the tidal waters.

Most of our ducks are on the upward trend, although some, such as the European Widgeon and the Redhead, are still uncommon to rare. One of Long Island's rarest winter visitants is the Eastern Harlequin Duck. Beginning with 1922 there was a marked increase of the rarer fresh water ducks on Long Island and each year larger and larger numbers and a greater variety of species are observed.

The Canvas-back, usually rare, is irregular in its numbers and points of concentration. It has occasionally appeared in flocks of 500 or more on eastern Long Island. The Shoveller and the Gadwall, both considered rare on Long Island by Griscom in 1923, occur regularly in the fresh water duck localities of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Still not abundant, but on the increase, are the Wood Duck and the Hooded Merganser.

The American Merganser is one of the few ducks less common on Long Island than elsewhere, except in extremely severe weather when, with the inland waters frozen over, they are forced to the open waters on the coast. The Red-breasted Mergansers are abundant. Abundant also are the Scoters, the Greater Scaup, the American Golden-eye and the Old-squaw.

The increase of the Ring-necked Duck on Long Island is one of the most outstanding local changes in the last ten years. Before 1932 the European Teal was considered an accidental visitant from Europe. J. G. Bell reported several specimens taken in 1858 and earlier. In December, 1900, two birds were reported shot in Merrick. Then for almost thirty-two years there was no record of this species until it

was found wintering on Long Island in 1932. Since that date the European Teal is a rare but regular winter visitant.

The Green-winged Teal, which had been almost wiped out, was recorded on Long Island again in small numbers by 1910 and is now on the upward trend. In the fall of 1934, 400 in one flock were seen at the Jones Beach Sanctuary.

Although so many of our Long Island birds are showing an encouraging increase, none of them present the spectacular flocks they did in the years gone by.

#### CONSERVATION OF BIRDS

Few people today viewing the suburban towns and villages of Long Island can possibly imagine the abundant wild life that once populated these shores.

In fact, it is startling to anyone today to realize that in 1670, only 275 years ago, deer, bear, and wolves roamed in large numbers through its forest-covered hills; that wildfowl were present in such great abundance that the island fairly teemed with turkey, Heath Hen, quail, partridge, cranes, geese and all manner of ducks, to say nothing of the great clouds of gulls, terns and shore birds that rose to clamor above the sand of its beaches.

Giraud, writing in 1843, says that not only is Long Island the resort of nearly every species of water bird found within the limits of the United States, but that out of 500 kinds of birds then known to belong to North America, 286 kinds have been known to visit this island.

It must have been a paradise to the Indian who alone knew this fullness of life, this rich resource of field and stream. Strangely enough, it is the Indian who was the first conservationist known to have in some measure protected its teeming wild life. We have as evidence a deed ceding an area for a part of Jamaica to the white settlers in 1658 stating that no person shall cut down a tree wherein an eagle nests.

But the white man held no wild life sacred—he came to these shores uninhibited and within some 200 years had turned the ninety miles of shore line into a vast amphitheater for sport.

Giraud wrote his book, the only complete description of local bird life of a century ago, in the manner of writing to the sportsmen to instruct them as to the species found on Long Island and the way in which best to obtain them. He was of the era of great slaughter that reduced North American wild life to twenty per cent of its former abundance. Up to the year 1860 gunning was done by comparatively few individuals and, as one sporting editor put it in 1901, “they could in no way make any considerable impression on the hordes of wild-fowl”. But evidence shows a very different picture. A book published in New York City in 1867 was written by Thomas Farrington Devoe, who had noted the game food in the New York market from 1832 to 1867. It presents plenty of evidence to the contrary.

Devoe stated that the Passenger Pigeon was then being brought to the market in thousands. He listed Labrador Ducks appearing in



the market in the months of March and October in numbers. He named the Eskimo Curlew as a frequent sight and said it was the best of all curlews for the table. This species became virtually extinct. Devoe included thirty-three kinds of ducks, geese and swans, besides grebes and loons. He listed also thirty native shore birds, five species of coots, four herons, Turtle Dove, eagles and twenty-nine small birds considered game in the market of that day.

The small birds called game were Nighthawks, Flickers, Robins, Meadow-larks, Bobolinks, blackbirds, Purple Finches, Seaside Finches, Cedar Birds, Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Hermit Thrushes, Baltimore Orioles, Blue Jays, Red-headed Woodpeckers, cuckoos and Kingfishers. He also drew attention to Kingfisher and Flicker squabs in the market.

Bobolinks were trapped up to the year 1865 and sold as songsters as were also Cardinals. It was a common enough practice about Jamaica. Meadow-larks and Robins were taken for market as late as 1885. But it was the waterfowl and shore birds that were exploited to the limit in this decade. Giraud writes of Red-breasted Sandpipers known to gunners on Long Island as Robin Snipe and eagerly sought out. Now they are a rarity. Semipalmated Sandpipers, he notes, are easy game, numerous and considered a great delicacy. Twenty-two birds at a single shot were a common bag because of their habit of bunching together.

Of the Lesser Yellow-legs he quotes one gunner's boast of 106 birds taken at a single shot by means of discharging both barrels into a flock. Wilson's Snipe were numerous and according to Giraud were greatly prized by the hunters who referred to them as English Snipe. Woodcock were every man's game and he speaks of every available piece of ground convenient to the city as crowded with hunters and their dogs when the season opened as of July 4th. He did not mention that this date coincided with the nesting period of this species.

Long-billed Curlews and other curlews he mentions as not numerous, but answering readily to the fowler's whistle. In fact, he says it was possible to kill as many as fifteen at one time because the curlews return to the cries of the wounded.

Canada Geese, one of the wariest of all birds, were lured in by live decoys and thus taken. But it was the Brant which was the favorite of gunners. Indeed, Long Island was famous for the Brant shooting in Great South Bay. This was confined to the spring months as the birds do not migrate through Long Island in great numbers in the autumn.

A great many Brant were killed on the sandbars by the use of blinds. Fire Island was a celebrated spot for this sport and several hundred dollars' worth of birds were sent to market annually from this one place. One expert claimed an average of thirty to thirty-five birds a week. The most destructive method of hunting Brant was the use of batteries. In a single battery, 125 decoys were used with a sunken box accommodating the gunner. Double batteries were sometimes employed using 150 decoys.

The destruction wrought by this method must have been terrific because, even as early as 1838, a law was passed in New York State

prohibiting the use of batteries. This law was respected for a short time and then disregarded by professional hunters and finally repealed. The use of batteries is not permitted today under the Federal law.

In the year 1909 it was reported to the State Commission of Game and Fisheries that the Long Island Brant Law was hampering the work of game protectors along with the provision permitting the possession of ducks two months after the season. The Brant Law, while bad in itself, was particularly vicious in that it gave the spring duck hunters an excuse for being on the water during the closed season. It was advocated to repeal the Brant Law. By 1911 the Brant Law was amended, the open season for Brant being changed from October 1-April 30 to October 1-January 10. In 1919 the law limited the bag to forty waterfowl when two or more persons occupy the same boat or battery.

But to return to the sportsmen's era—Black Ducks were among the favored and were obtained by a method known as "dusking". This method was described as lying in wait on moonlight nights near the place the ducks were known to frequent and shooting them as they flew in. Two celebrated gunners boasted of killing ninety-nine Black Ducks by this method in one night. The bags of the bygone day were sixty, eighty or even one hundred birds in one day.

Today, in 1948, the bag of waterfowl is limited by Federal law. The Long Island hunter is allowed to take, during the season in any one day, ten ducks, except the American and Red-breasted Mergansers and including more than one Wood Duck. He is allowed twenty-five American and Red-breasted Mergansers singly or in the aggregate. He can take four Blue Geese, plus two of other kinds including Brant, fifteen rails, except Sora and Coot, twenty-five Coot, twenty-five Sora and four Woodcock.

The days and deeds of the early sportsmen were as nothing in comparison with the bloody slaughter beginning about 1895. A French milliner had put an aigrette on a hat for Madame and all Paris looked and loved it and clamored for more and more and more. Before long, millions of dollars changed hands at the yearly bird-feather auctions held in Paris, London and New York. But little did Madame know or care of the pain and death and destruction involved in this newest "cliché-de-mode". Unfortunately, this smart madness did not hold only with aigrettes. The clamor swelled to a roar for every kind of bird feather. Indeed, whole birds were soon perched saucily on almost every woman's hat. The feathers of Humming-birds, tanagers, Laughing Gulls and terns from the New World, Birds of Paradise from the South Seas and Skylarks from the Old World; all were sum and substance in the millinery world at the turn of the century.

Long Island contributed her share in this terrible business as well as in the killing of songbirds for the food markets of Manhattan. There are people living today in 1946 who can remember barrels of Robins, Flickers and other songbirds being shipped to market. The last large flocks of Passenger Pigeons migrating in the autumn were shot down on the south shore by professional hunters and sold in the



market for six cents apiece. Migrating Tree Swallows were induced to alight on horizontal poles and shot or whacked down by the score.

The Tern colonies on the island suffered the greatest depletion during the craze for bird-feathers for women's hats. They were almost completely wiped out. Two gunners of Freeport claimed to have killed 600 terns in one day. Fifty years ago there were dozens of veteran hunters along the south shore of Long Island who supplied the ever-growing demand for the "saucy little bird on Nellie's hat". But the eyes of the world were finally opened to the horror of this business, thanks to the crusade of the National Audubon Society and other conservationist groups, and it was abolished. In 1913 the passage by Congress of a tariff bill outlawed all ornamental feathers in the United States. Within two years the Dominion of Canada followed suit. In 1941 Governor Lehman signed a bill that controlled wild bird plumage sales and with this act the wild bird plumage trade in New York State became a thing of the past.

But, before this occurred, unnumbered thousands of game birds and song birds were killed. Many species virtually disappeared. Song birds also suffered as Long Island became thickly populated. Civilization brought its telephone and electric light wires. The spreading communities absorbed the natural cover. Lighthouses along the coast took a terrific toll of migrating birds. The wild life of short decades ago has dwindled down to alarming proportions. The so-called sportsman and the professional gunner unregulated by law, the demands of the millinery trade and the natural spread of towns and villages all were causes of the diminishing bird life of the island.

In looking over the credit side of protection afforded, we find that the earliest game laws were in the form of hunting permits issued in 1629 by the West India Company to residents of the New Netherland.

On April 3, 1849, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Suffolk voted to pass a law which was designed to preserve the small birds of the area. The law was to take effect on January 1, 1853. It provided that no person "shall kill or destroy in any manner the nests or eggs of any Catbird, Lark, Blue Jay, Bluebird, Sparrow, Linnet, Wren, Robin Redbreast, Brown Thrasher, Bobolink, Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will, Woodpecker, High-Hole, Bunting, Martin, Fire Bird or Cedar Bird". The fine was three dollars for each offense. Any person, in his own name or in the name of the Overseers of the Poor of the town where the offense was committed, could prosecute and retain half the penalty, the other half, after expenses of prosecution were deducted, going to the Overseers of the Poor of the town where the songbirds were molested.

In 1886 New York State led the way in the New World by establishing laws to protect the birds migrating in the spring. But apparently this had nothing to do with the Long Island Brant shooting. The first constructive and comprehensive game laws established in New York State came in the year 1896 when a Fish, Game and Forest Commission was finally set up. But in every section of these laws a provision was included that these laws did not apply to Long Island

and Long Island Sound. It appears to have been always open season on Long Island at this date.

Subsequent years slowly wrought changes for the better, the Federal Migratory Act of 1918 being the greatest of all. However, Long Island always had special game laws that were more lenient than those of the rest of the state. For instance, when there was no open season for Quail for several years in New York State, a bag of forty Quail still could be taken on Long Island between November 1 to December 31. Whether this marked leniency, which still exists today, is due to a hang-over of the former superabundance or to the idea that the migrations from New England pass largely through the island or to the lobbying by the powerful hunting clubs is a matter of conjecture. There are some twenty-odd hunting clubs on the island that have their own game preserves and game farms and that are allowed to kill off eighty per cent of their own release.

So today we have both State and Federal laws regulating the killing of game birds on Long Island and full Federal protection for insectivorous and other non-game birds. All persons over sixteen years of age hunting migratory waterfowl in addition to the New York State hunting license are required to have a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp of current issue. By this means a check is in the hands of the Federal Government whereby a mean balance may be maintained between the breeding-ground hatch and the hunter's bag. If the hunter's bag exceeds the breeding-ground hatch the Government with its Migratory Act can close down on the following season's bag limit.

In addition to having game regulation by law we also have added protection for wild life in the truly splendid park systems that traverse this island. It is against the law to shoot, hunt or trap on these parkways, though this may not be thoroughly understood by all and sundry. And though it is manifestly impossible to patrol these hundreds of miles all the time, the game wardens and the state police do a very thorough job.

Long Island, furthermore, can be justly proud of one sanctuary for birds founded at the death of Theodore Roosevelt in 1919. It is called the Roosevelt Bird Sanctuary, is situated at Oyster Bay and is owned and operated by the National Audubon Society. It is a fitting memorial to the first president of the United States who while in office was chiefly responsible for the first steps in conservation undertaken by the United States. When Theodore Roosevelt was president he was instrumental in establishing fifty-one Federal bird reserves. He was an ardent nature student and ornithologist even as a boy on Long Island.

The sanctuary consists of some twelve acres of land which have been developed into what has been called the perfect bird sanctuary. It is adjacent to the Roosevelt home, known to the world as Sagamore Hill, and to the final resting place of Theodore Roosevelt. Not only is it a place of safety for the birds where people can see and hear them; but there one can learn the best methods for attracting birds by providing proper cover and food-bearing shrubs. The number of



species seen in the sanctuary since 1934 totals 146. The number nesting there has increased from fourteen the first season to thirty nesting species today.

There are other sanctuaries on Long Island that are also worthy of note. The four most outstanding are Alley Pond State Park Sanctuary, Heckscher State Park Sanctuary, the Jones Beach State Park Sanctuary and the Shinnecock National Wildlife Refuge.

The Jones Beach Sanctuary comprises some 400 acres. At first, it was a state sanctuary. Then it became a Federal refuge for a couple of years and, lastly, was claimed by the township of Oyster Bay. During World War II, the sanctuary was not patrolled regularly, though a caretaker was provided who chopped holes in the ice for the surface feeding ducks and Canada Geese. Grain was also supplied. This sanctuary was formerly a hunting estate. It is now visited by the rarer of the fresh water ducks as well as by other migrant waterfowl.

The Shinnecock National Wildlife Refuge consists of some 842 acres. It was established in 1937 as a refuge and resting place for migratory waterfowl in Hampton Bays. It is the hope of the United States Department of the Interior that additional land may be acquired and that it can be developed into a well-protected resting area for migratory waterfowl and shore birds. But this has not been possible to date.

There are also several private sanctuaries, such as Nassau Point Sanctuary and Mill Neck Sanctuary, owned and operated by residents of these communities. The work of conservation on Long Island also has been furthered by the interest stimulated by bird clubs of the area. Individual members of these clubs, as well as the clubs themselves, have, for example, often undertaken the feeding of the birds in winter.

#### LONG ISLAND BIRD CLUBS

Maintaining feeding stations during winter months has been just one phase of the many-sided activity of the bird clubs. Among these groups, the most active have been the Baldwin Bird Club, the Bird Club of Long Island, the Queens County Bird Club and the Woodmere Academy Bird Club.

The Baldwin Bird Club was organized in 1938, its first meeting being held in June of that year at the Baldwin, L. I., Public Library. It was the outgrowth of field trips taken by a group of young people under the leadership of Mrs. James A. Selby. Edmund Morgan was first president of the club. Succeeding presidents have been Herbert Beatty, Mrs. James A. Selby, Mrs. Harvie D. Manes, Edwin Way Teale, Alice Farrington, Mrs. Edwin Way Teale and Mrs. Howard Meinke. Regular field trips have been a feature of the club's activity and away-from-home trips have included expeditions to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, in Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. The club has taken part in the annual Christmas Census and similar activities. Monthly meetings are held. The programs include moving pictures, talks by such well-known ornithologists as Roger T. Peterson, Allan D. Cruick-

shank, John T. Nichols and John J. Elliott. By means of bird-skins brought from the American Museum of Natural History, members of the club become familiar with various groups of local birds. A feeding station is maintained at the Baldwin Public Library during winter months and a bulletin board in the library is devoted to items of interest to bird students of the community. Conservation projects of various kinds, such as the posting of woods adjoining Baldwin and cooperating with the local fire departments in preventing the burning over of the meadows at nesting time, have been carried out by the club. Its members, numbering between thirty and forty, come from several surrounding communities as well as from Baldwin.

The Bird Club of Long Island is the oldest and the largest of the groups. It was organized in 1915 with Theodore Roosevelt as its initial president. It holds monthly bird walks and one annual meeting. The membership in 1940 was in excess of 450 and represented more than 70 different communities. In recent years, the organization has been closely associated with the National Audubon Society. Allan D. Cruickshank was employed by the club for a period to aid in stimulating interest in birds by his lectures and to assist in the formation of school bird clubs on Long Island. Under the editorship of John T. Nichols, the Bird Club of Long Island has published several valuable papers in a series on *Birds of Long Island*.

The Queens County Bird Club was started in Flushing in 1930. Its monthly meetings are held in a Park Department building, The House of the Weeping Birch, in Flushing. Bird movies, lectures by ornithologists, study of bird skins, and similar activities form the programs. Feeding stations and birdhouses have been set up and conservation activity of various kinds is engaged in by the organization. The membership runs to about thirty. At intervals the organization issues *The Bulletin of the Queens County Bird Club*.

The Woodmere Academy Bird Club, while confined to a maximum of a dozen members, was extremely active for a decade, between its beginning in 1926 and 1936, when most of the members separated to go to college. Dr. David E. Harrower, science teacher of the academy, formed the club with five members, boys of about twelve. The emphasis of the club from the start was on field work. Almost daily field trips, before and after school, were made with longer trips to Montauk Point and Jones Beach and other points of bird-interest undertaken during vacations. Weekly meetings were held, the programs consisting of prepared papers by members and a discussion of field notes. Two issues of an ambitious, forty-page publication, *The Heron*, were issued in 1930 and 1932.

One outcome of this club's activity has had an important bearing on the stimulation of bird-study interest throughout the island. In 1936, Dr. Harrower started a mimeographed letter giving the places and dates where various species of birds had been seen. Two years later, Robert Arbib, Jr., one of the members, continued the idea as "Long Island Bird Notes", a weekly column appearing Saturdays in the *Nassau Daily Review-Star*. Since 1941, this column has been conducted by John J. Elliott, well-known ornithologist of Seaford. He



has contributed something like a quarter of a million words, including the observation records. The column, recording as it does the arrival and departure of various species of migrants and the abundance of the different species at various times of the year, has proved of value in many ways. The Snowy Owl records, for example, have been used by professional ornithologists in covering the Long Island area. The column is received and used by such institutions as the American Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, at Harvard University; the National Audubon Society and the New York State Museum, at Albany. This column—on offshoot of bird-club activities—as well as the bird clubs themselves, have played important roles in conservation and in stimulating increased interest in the rich bird life of Long Island.

### *Long Island Breeding Birds*

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

Fortunate indeed is the individual who holds a deep interest in God's Kingdom as revealed to us in Nature. All about us the surge of life pulses, with vivacious singing and nesting of our native birds, blooming of flowers, alert fish of pond and stream, insect courtship and battles, shy mammals of field and woodland, reptiles basking on half-sunken logs or crawling over the forest floor; all these may be seen and studied by the quiet observer who occasionally takes time off for his own soul's good, from his human associates.

It therefore gives this writer pleasure to present this paper on one of these subjects—that of listing our Long Island breeding birds, principally with reference to their preferred habitat, where the rarer and more unusual nesting birds were more recently reported, and a few paragraphs pertaining to ecological conditions and habits.

Long continued records indicate that breeding birds vary in numbers and species. Some of the changes that eliminate a species entirely usually occur over a rather long period of time and generally include birds that require a specialized habitat. Sometimes the mere burning over of low meadows, bordering on uplands, will eliminate the Henslow's Sparrow from breeding, as it requires considerable dry growth for an undercover. With the return of a few years' accumulation of dead grasses, the birds are usually back. Should the location be filled, this would eliminate the species from that area. As all the areas occupied, however, are not being filled or yearly burned over, the species still persists. Likewise with the Black-crowned Night Heron, a land development breaks up one colony, but another area has become overgrown and a new colony is formed.

Generally, the bulk of Long Island's breeding species are sufficiently stabilized to list with reference to recent records, and such a list should be of value for comparison with future compilations. Because of the appearance in literature from time to time of erroneous

remarks that certain species do nest, as for instance the Great Blue Heron, a few of the non-breeding birds will be mentioned.

Companion volumes of recent origin which may be of interest to the student of Long Island birds are: Allan D. Cruickshank's *Birds Around New York City*, 1942, American Museum of Natural History Press, New York City, and *The Natural History of Smithtown*, 1939, by Loring W. Turrell.

Because Long Island is geographically small, and as no discussion involving species out of the region will be made, only the common name of the species as recognized in the check-list of the American Ornithologist Union will be given.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE.** This little diver is the only one of its family that breeds on Long Island. Although the Common Loon, another diver, is occasionally seen along our shores during the breeding season, they do not nest. This Grebe may be found breeding in ponds containing dense aquatic growth, usually bordered with cattails or other thick concealment. They are rather shy during nesting, but later may lead their young about quite openly compared to some of their shyer neighbors. The bird is an uncommon and sporadic breeder although rather regular at Mill Neck. It was reported as breeding at Hewlett in 1946 and they are recorded from time to time elsewhere, eastward, on the least-molested ponds. Like almost all of our breeding birds they should be looked for in June or very early July to establish their nesting status, as migration sometimes begins by the middle of August and there may be some movement away from their nesting grounds prior to that time, even in July.

**EASTERN GREEN HERON.** Although the Great Blue Heron, American Egret and the Snowy Egret breed in the State of New Jersey, they do not nest on Long Island. The Green Heron is a common and widely distributed breeder in our region and is well known. They nest singly or in small colonies in trees or thickets, breeding in diversified locations near marsh or on upland. They are well distributed over Long Island, being commonly found at Jones Beach.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.** This species, like the Green Heron, is well known and widely distributed over Long Island. It breeds in trees in larger colonies than does the Green Heron and there is considerable shifting of locations, especially on western Long Island, the colony at Massapequa having changed nesting grounds three times during the past three decades. Predatory crows, as in colonies upstate, may sometimes destroy eggs and perhaps cause them to desert their breeding area. Night Herons may best be seen early and late in the day as they fly out of the nesting colonies to feed in the shallows or return to feed their hungry young.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.** The Yellow-crowned Night Heron was first discovered nesting on Long Island by A. D. Cruickshank at Massapequa in 1938, when four pair were found with nests, each containing five eggs. In 1941, a nest, containing three eggs, was found at Great Neck. The breeding continued at Massapequa, but for the past two years there apparently have been no nests there nor has any report come to me of this species breeding elsewhere. Several birds have been reported rather regularly from Jones Beach in



1946 and there is a possibility that they may breed somewhere in the vicinity. Reports of birds seen have also come from the Orient area, on eastern Long Island, in recent years during the nesting season. They select a breeding area similar to that of the Black-crowned Night Heron and it was in or bordering this colony where they bred in Massapequa.

AMERICAN BITTERN. This large bittern is a rather rare and local nesting bird along the South Shore of Long Island where its hollow "pumping" may be heard during breeding season. It has been reported in recent years as nesting at Idlewild, in the Merrick-Freeport area, at Massapequa and in southern Suffolk County. It is rather secretive and its nesting haunts are large wet marshes. They keep within the confines of these areas and may easily escape notice unless observed on the wing.

EASTERN LEAST BITTERN. This attractive little bittern formerly bred at Idlewild, on Jamaica Bay, in a tangled brackish marsh of phragmites, cattails and other aquatic plants. The overlying Idlewild airport now covers this area and the birds are not known to breed in adjacent marshes. Normally they prefer thick beds of cattails, pickerel weeds, arrowheads and other aquatic growth. Because of the lack of large suitable breeding areas on Long Island, this species may breed in one place for a few years and disappear again. It has been reported as nesting at Mill Neck in 1932, 1933. Cruickshank, 1941, states there were at least six breeding locations on Long Island. The best known breeding area was at Idlewild. *Long Island Bird Notes* listed six pair present in 1938 in mid-June with four nests found. In June, 1946, a calling bird was heard and later seen at Mastic.

MUTE SWAN. An introduced species from the Old World, the Mute Swan is now feral on Long Island. It breeds commonly along the South Shore, and along the North Shore may be found in such favorable areas as at Mill Neck. It is found to a lesser degree eastward along the Sound and in the interior. It is one of the most conspicuous birds we have as it forms its high nesting platform or swims gracefully with bowed neck and needs little introduction to the reader.

CANADA GOOSE. This species breeds far to the north, and Long Island breeding birds are those which have been either crippled, released or have escaped and become feral. Often the big V formations drift down out of the sky as they migrate in spring and join up with these feral birds. Soon afterward they wing northward, leaving behind these Long Island brethren, which are unidentifiable in life, to array their bulky nests and lead their downy goslings around our local ponds. These feral Canada Geese are rare compared to the Mute Swan. Up to a few years ago they bred regularly at Jones Beach. They apparently cannot endure molestation as under the ministrations of William Vogt in the early nineteen hundred and thirties they prospered when the Jones Beach Sanctuary pond was part of the State Park. Likewise at South Haven (perhaps the best breeding area at the present time) molestation is at a minimum.

**COMMON MALLARD.** The Mallard is also feral. Truly wild Mallards, occurring in migration, breed far to the west. These are unidentifiable in life from the true strains of our feral birds. Our breeding Mallard nests on the shores of many of our ponds and the female may be seen leading her line of 12 or even 14 downy young along their margins in late spring and early summer. They are widely distributed where partial protection is offered, but much less given to breeding in the salt marshes than the following species.



(Photo by Edwin Way Teale)

*Family of Mallard Ducks*

**COMMON BLACK DUCK.** This is the most abundant breeding duck on Long Island. During early spring the female builds a grassy nest in some salt, brackish or fresh water marsh while the males, like others of this large family, disport themselves in small flocks unburdened by domestic duties. The Black Duck breeds from the Beechhurst area on the Sound, and the Jamaica Bay area on the South Shore, eastward to Montauk and Orient, being commonest in great marshy areas along the south bays and ocean. It is reported as a common permanent resident, breeding in swamps and along the Nissequogue River in the Smithtown region (Turrell). Considerable burning of the marshes yearly are perhaps a deterring factor in the breeding of this species along both forks from Riverhead eastward.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL.** Although our records are lightly sprinkled with sight observations of this species in June, we have only three



nesting reports for Long Island—Orient, Speonk and East Moriches. It is essentially a bird of fresh water marshes, ponds or sluggish streams and considerable investigation in such areas might reveal more breeding birds.

WOOD DUCK. This, the most beautiful of our ducks, nests for the most part along the North Shore, but has been reported during the past few years, with young unable to fly, at Seaford and Wantagh. It is a regular breeding bird at Mill Neck. In the Smithtown region, according to Turrell (1939), two or three pair regularly nest. Because of nesting in hollow trees, this species may be attracted into suitable protected areas by the erection of nesting boxes.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. Normally a non-breeder, this bird nests casually, perhaps because there are so many crippled after the hunting season remaining during the summer, mostly on eastern Long Island. We have no nesting records west of Mastic. Breeding evidence during the past comes elsewhere from Shinnecock Bay, Gardiner's Island, Oyster Pond and Fischer's Island.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK. Breeding records are indefinite for this species and apparently are confined mostly to Suffolk County. Some records coming in are later changed to Cooper's Hawk, and because of the similarity of both species and their secretive habits in the breeding season, some study is necessary to properly identify the nester. It has not been definitely recorded as breeding in Oyster Bay or in the Smithtown area, nor can I find any recent reports of its nesting elsewhere.

COOPER'S HAWK. This species breeds in our woodlands and may occasionally be heard calling in resentment when its nesting area is invaded. They build rather high in trees. Recent records come from Hewlett, Hempstead, Seaford, Massapequa, Commack, Mastic and Shelter Island. Along the North Shore the species breeds, and in the Smithtown area it is a common summer resident, nesting in tall, unfrequented woods (Turrell, 1939).

EASTERN RED-TAILED HAWK. The Red-tail is the nesting species of eastern Long Island whereas the Red-shouldered seems to prefer the western sections along the North Shore. Cruickshank, 1941, states that the bird is virtually confined (on Long Island) to the great pine and oak barrens between Melville and Riverhead. Recent June and July reports come from Manorville and Mastic in that region. Perhaps more consistent are breeding records from Northwest Woods on the Montauk Peninsula where several recent nestings have been observed. It also nests on Shelter Island.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK. The big, soaring, Red-tailed, Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks are the three breeding species of this race on Long Island. They soar little during nesting season, are secretive and resort much to the treetops. Most of our records of the Red-shouldered come from the North Shore along the western end. They feed largely on wood frogs, snakes, etc., and appear to like areas of damp Carolinian flora. Recent records come from Roslyn eastward to Cold Springs Harbor and sparingly to the West Hills, including several nests located at Mill Neck and Cold Spring Harbor.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK.** The Broad-winged Hawk, especially in recent years, appears to be increasing on Long Island. It is a bird of the hills and a nesting record from Idlewild is very unusual. During the breeding season of 1946, I was impressed with the number of birds present. They seem to prefer tall oak woods, occasionally flying out over the bordering roads, or if the woods are entered, utter a high-pitched whistle with wide-open bill and tail apparently drawn in by the effort. They are rather widely reported for the past five years. Consistent records and breeding reports come from Oyster Bay, Cold Spring Harbor, West Hills, Smithtown, Commack, Manorville, Mastic, and East Moriches. It has also been reported from Sag Harbor and Gardiner's Island.

**BALD EAGLE.** Apparently this species no longer breeds, although reported commonly at one time. Roy Latham, of Orient, states that there are no more Bald Eagles breeding on Shelter Island since 1930 and, apparently, this termination concluded our Long Island reports for the present at least.

**MARSH HAWK.** This species is commonly observed quartering our marshes where its white upper tail-coverts may be observed as it wheels in search of its prey. It is an ardent hunter whether in search of mouse or bird. It breeds from the Jamaica Bay area eastward, most commonly along the great South Shore marshes. It nests more sparingly along the North Shore with recent reports from Orient and to a lesser degree in the open areas of the interior of Long Island.

**OSPREY.** From Mastic (irregularly) eastward is the range of the big fish hawk. On the extreme eastern end of Long Island they become a characteristic part of the landscape with their large nests perched on man-made supports, poles or in trees. They breed commonly on Gardiner's and Cartwright Islands, less so at Orient and on Shelter Island, on the Montauk peninsula, and elsewhere west on the South Shore to Mastic. They are conspicuous in the areas where common and are at times rather noisy while flying overhead. On July 3, 1941, sixty nine nests were found on Gardiner's Island and 125 birds banded in one day by Roy Wilcox of Speonk.

**SPARROW HAWK.** Although its larger relative, the Duck Hawk, has been reported as nesting at least once on the ledges of a New York City skyscraper, it has not been found nesting in Brooklyn or anywhere on Long Island. The smaller reddish-brown Sparrow Hawk, however, has nested in a tin cornice in downtown Brooklyn for several years, successfully rearing its young, and elsewhere over the city it is occasionally observed. Further out on Long Island the species is regularly distributed, with nesting records coming to me from Beechhurst (on the Sound) and Jamaica Bay to Orient and around the farmlands on the Montauk peninsula. It is a bird of the open country, nesting in a cavity, and may be seen hovering over meadow or golf course, in summer, on the search for cricket or grasshopper.

**EASTERN RUFFED GROUSE.** The Heath Hen was last taken on Long Island in 1840, but the Ruffed Grouse still persists in the wilder areas of middle and eastern Long Island from Smithtown



eastward to Riverhead and on the Montauk peninsula. It is a bird of deep woodlands and a permanent resident. It was heard drumming and otherwise reported in the Wading River region, at Manorville and west of Riverhead recently. It is occasional westward in the Deer Park and Northport areas, but there appears to be no Nassau County record in recent years.

**BOB-WHITE.** The Bob-white is a regular breeding bird over most of Long Island, sometimes breeding into October. Four pair were reported nesting in Beechhurst, northern Queens County, in 1940, and it has been reported from the Jamaica Bay region eastward through the open Suffolk County areas to Riverhead, but, directly opposite to the Ruffed Grouse, appears most commonly along the South Shore, being regular at Massapequa and elsewhere.

**PHEASANT.** The introduced pheasant is more or less of mixed stock, the Asiatic races predominating. It is rather widely spread over Long Island and appears to be most commonly reported from the western end, apparently being stocked most frequently there. It is common in the Jones Beach area and tolerably common in the Oyster Bay region. The Wild Turkey formerly bred on Long Island in the early settlers' time and the little California Quail has been released at least once (at Baldwin, 1943), but apparently failed to become acclimated. Other game birds such as the Reeves Pheasant have been shot recently (two at Massapequa).

**KING RAIL.** Several years ago I reviewed the status of King, Clapper and Virginia Rails in *Long Island Bird Notes*. At that time I procured no actual breeding records of the King Rail or accompanying young. Cruickshank, 1941, cites only one definite record, a nest found at Bayside, June 11, 1924. Neither Boulton and Nichols in the Long Island Bird Club's Bulletin No. 2, *A List of the Birds of Oyster Bay and Vicinity, Long Island*, 1940, nor Turrell in *The Natural History of Smithtown*, 1939, lists this species, even as a migrant, in the Oyster Bay and Smithtown areas respectively. Two, in the Mill Neck marshes, April 22, 1945, were perhaps migrants. A single mid-July, 1946, bird in a Baldwin marsh was probably a vagrant. A careful study of the fresh water marshes in which this species is likely to breed is needed to clarify its status.

**NORTHERN CLAPPER RAIL.** The clattering of this big gray rail is a characteristic sound coming out of the salt marshes in spring, and this bird is common from Jamaica Bay to Jones Beach on the ocean and across the bay at Oceanside and Baldwin. East of Freeport we have no records on the north side of the south bays. It breeds less commonly than westward in the Gilgo, Oak Beach areas. No marshes of any large size are found along the ocean from Fire Island Inlet to east of Patchogue. The bird has been recorded as breeding in the Moriches marshes and possibly at Shinnecock. On both forks, calling birds have been heard in breeding season at Acabonack, Three Mile Harbor, North Sea Harbor, Orient, Cutchogue, Mattituck and along the Sound at Mt. Sinai, Sunken Meadow, Mill Neck, and Little Neck as well as in a few intermediate locations. Interesting is the Clapper Rail's absence from the Mt. Sinai marshes for over fifty years and their return about a decade ago.

There are now about six or seven pairs nesting. Apparently the birds were driven off by eggers who, according to old residents, traversed the marshes taking eggs by the pailfuls. Because at Mt. Sinai and elsewhere new waterways permit a more direct flow, therefore flooding the marshes sooner than with the old winding channels, good Clapper Rail breeding grounds along the Sound are restricted.

**VIRGINIA RAIL.** This small reddish rail breeds in both salt and fresh-water marshes and therefore enjoys a more extensive range than the Clapper, although not nesting in as large colonies. It breeds on both sides of the bays eastward and in several locations in the Orient region. Along the Sound, calling birds have been heard in the breeding season at Sunken Meadow, Huntington Bay, Fort Solonga, Bayside and Flushing. In suitable locations the marsh need not be as extensive as the Clapper Rail usually requires.

**SORA.** The Sora prefers fresh-water marshes and formerly bred at Idlewild near Jamaica Bay, 14 being listed in 1938. With the new airport covering the area, one pair was reported as breeding nearby in 1946. From Mill Neck comes a report of its breeding in 1935 and one from Fort Solonga in 1930. Records are scattered elsewhere, none very recent coming to my attention.

**BLACK RAIL.** A nest and eggs were found on the extreme upper edge of a salt marsh in narrow-leaf cattails at Oak Beach, June 20, 1937, constituting the first nesting for New York State. After breeding, the unhatched eggs and nest were turned over to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. For several years this species was reported in the same area with both male and female seen and heard calling. Reports of nesting at Long Beach on one or two occasions are not fully authentic. All our young rails are black or blackish and because of this one must use caution in identifying this little dark species. Egg measurements too are essential in checking nests.

**FLORIDA GALLINULE.** This species prefers cattails in deep water with some open water available. It is a rare nester on Long Island and, although no doubt breeding, there appears to be no very recent definite records of its occurrence. Reports show it as possibly nesting at Mill Neck in 1932 and as nesting in 1935. We have no recent records from Old Mill on Jamaica Bay or at Wantagh. At Fort Solonga it nested in 1930 and, according to one observer, it, in all probability, still does. It also nested for some years at Speonk. Our most recent record of breeding evidence is one young bird observed at Plandome, June 26, 1940.

**AMERICAN COOT.** There does not appear to be any record of the breeding of the Coot on Long Island prior to 1924 when, during two successive seasons, it was observed nesting at Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, in an area now filled. At Mill Neck, in 1940, a pair of Coots were observed attending young about a week old. The bird has been listed there each summer with the exception of one, during the war, when the area was practically unvisited. In 1945, young were observed, and one adult was present in the 1946 breeding season at this writing. Its habitat is a wet swampy area with small



expanses of water here and there among cattail clumps and the cattail-fringed borders.

PIPING PLOVER. The clear, whistled, "peep-lo" of this little sand-colored plover is a common sound in summer along our summer beaches. Locally, it breeds along our bays and on the Sound on the eastern end of Long Island and on Shelter Island. Its habitat lies where sandy fills or natural habitat provides suitable areas for it to scoop a depression in the soft sand and lay its three or four eggs. On the South Shore it feeds among the sandy pools on the bay edges back from the ocean. The Wilson's Plover, although advancing its range northward does not breed on Long Island at the present time.

KILLDEER. All over Long Island in suitable habitat the wild reiterated cry, "Killdeer, killdeer" is heard as this bird's breeding grounds are invaded. It has increased greatly during the past years with protection, and is found in open situations such as on sandy plains, farm lands, golf courses and developments. Here it scoops out a depression and lays its four eggs.

WOODCOCK. In the open situations along our swampy woods, the twittering flight song and abrupt, nasal "peent" of the Woodcock is heard in the spring. Back in the heart of the swampy tangle it breeds, nesting on the ground and laying its four eggs. In areas where common, holes bored in the soft mud or earth may be seen as indications of this bird's presence. It has been reported recently as breeding from the Woodmere region eastward locally to Shelter Island and as many as a dozen birds may be heard twittering their flight song in the spring at Massapequa.

UPLAND PLOVER. The Hempstead Plains are the recognized nesting grounds of this species on Long Island and away from there it is not known to breed. Although suspected of nesting in eastern Suffolk County, apparently there have been no nests found. On the Hempstead Plains its soft bubbling whistle, especially in early morning, makes it delightful associate while one remains in the vicinity. This is another species that has benefited through protection, having become nearly extirpated at the turn of the century.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. The little "teeter" or "spotty" has always been an associate since childhood as it has with many who have visited our local ponds. It breeds commonly along the outer strip, and also frequents our sluggish streams and pools where its loud "peet weet" comes from anxious birds as they fly back and forth apprehensive for the safety of their young. Of the large family of Sandpipers, only the Woodcock, Upland Plover and this species breed on Long Island. The Eastern Willet is not known to nest here.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. This species was discovered as breeding on Cartwright Island in the Herring Gull colony, a pair having been first found on July 18, 1940. A young bird, almost able to fly, was captured and banded on July 10, 1942. This constituted the first nesting record for New York State. This species has been extending its range southward for some years. The Cartwright Island record is the most southerly one along the Atlantic Coast.

**HERRING GULL.** It was first reported breeding in small colonies at Fischer's Island, 1933, at Cartwright Island in 1936 and on July 13, 1939, three hundred bred at Gardiner's Island and 250 on Cartwright Island. Nests were reported with eggs at Orient in early June, 1943. With the great increase of Herring Gulls in this region in recent years an extension of range is expected with this species. Eleven nests were reportedly found as far west as Fire Island Inlet in 1940. The Laughing Gull, formerly greatly persecuted, has not been known to breed on Long Island since 1888, although once a common nester. It is hoped this beautiful Gull will breed once more, as it breeds in New Jersey.

**COMMON TERN.** This species is now a common breeding bird from Jamaica Bay, locally along the ocean, eastward to Orient where there were reported about one hundred and twenty-five pairs nesting in 1940. This, however, is a great decrease over the six thousand pairs reported as breeding in 1930. They are very noisy birds, their loud, harsh "teears" resounding as they dash earthward at the intruder, sometimes hitting him on the head or hat before turning sharply upward for another earthly plunge. They scoop out a depression in the sand where they deposit their three or four spotted eggs. Eggers robbed their nests and the millinery trade nearly exterminated these birds around the turn of the century. They are greatly on the increase since protection.

**ROSEATE TERN.** This species is a local breeding of the extreme eastern end of Long Island with ten pairs reported as nesting at Orient, July 10, 1939. It breeds in or near the Common Tern colony and appears in some colonies elsewhere. A possible breeding record comes from Moriches in 1946 with a fledgling being observed fed by parents. It is to be hoped that this graceful long-tailed tern will nest on our western Long Island beaches in the not too distant future.

**LEAST TERN.** This little "Sea Swallow" with its Barn Swallow-like chatter, is perhaps our most abundant tern along the South Shore to Mecox. Although not nesting in such large colonies as those occupied by the Common Tern, it accepts smaller breeding areas and nests along the north side of our bays where sandy fill has been pumped on the marshes, as at Baldwin, Massapequa and elsewhere. Its return as a nester in 1926, from 1882, has been marked by a rapid increase in numbers and continued reports of breeding colonies pour in.

**BLACK SKIMMER.** This species was first noted as a Long Island breeding bird in 1934 at Gilgo Island (off Amityville). Shortly later it nested at Oak Beach and still later it was reported as nesting in a fairly large colony near Moriches Inlet. Infiltrating vegetation drove out the colony on Gilgo Island by 1940, but the Oak Beach colony, never large, still remains as does the one at Moriches. For the past few years a colony has been noted at Point Lookout and is at the present time the largest on western Long Island. This big, black and white bird is an attractive addition to our avifauna as it flies slowly over the water, dipping its under mandible beneath the surface and scooping up small marine life.



**EASTERN MOURNING DOVE.** It breeds from Beechhurst and Woodmere eastward and is regarded as tolerably common at Oyster Bay and common at Smithtown. Its shallow nest of coarse sticks is found often in conifers and usually near cultivated fields, around estates, lawns and farm lands.

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO.** This species is reported as tolerably common at Oyster Bay and common at Smithtown. It prefers thicket, gardens, along wooded edges and brushy fields as a nesting habitat. It is recorded as nesting in preferred habitat to Orient, but apparently does not nest along the outer beaches.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO.** This bird prefers the same habitat as the last and has about the same breeding range. Both Cuckoos nest in thickets and unlike the European Cuckoo, raise their own young. They are very beneficial as they consume large quantities of tent caterpillars.

**BARN OWL.** The Barn Owl nests in old buildings, in water towers, church steeples, barns and occasionally in hollow trees. Its haunts are usually in the vicinity of farms, estates and more-populated places. They are very beneficial as they kill many rats and mice. Often their presence may go unnoticed unless their hissing call is heard as they fly overhead. One of our recent nesting records comes from Fischer's Island, other reports come from Flushing, in the Jamaica Bay region, Bayport, Millers Place and Speonk.

**EASTERN SCREECH OWL.** This species breeds locally from Flushing eastward to Shelter Island and it generally uses a tree or bird box for nesting. Numerous records come in of this bird, except from the outer strip. It appears far more plentiful in Suffolk than in southern Nassau County where it is rare and somewhat irregular. It is listed as common at Oyster Bay and at Smithtown.

**GREAT HORNED OWL.** A 1946 summer report comes of two Great Horned Owls at Mastic. There appear no recent nests found on Long Island. Turrell, 1939, states that the species had not been recorded recently in the Smithtown region; that George Strong of Smithtown had not seen one in twenty-five years, although formerly quite plentiful. He cites two breeding records, one from Patchogue, 1915 (Overton), and one from East Moriches, 1930 (Wilcox). It is a bird of deep woods when nesting, often using a crow's or squirrel's nest for a foundation for its own.

**NORTHERN BARRED OWL.** Apparently a very rare bird on Long Island, there appear to be no breeding records for the past five years at least. Cruickshank, 1941, cites three undated records—Meadow Brook, Heckscher Park and Shelter Island. It is fond of deeply wooded swamps.

**LONG-EARRED OWL.** This species breeds in about half a dozen known locations, one at Massapequa. It is partial to conifers, usually nesting in one, but sometimes also nests in a deciduous tree or elsewhere. Its notes, a soft cooing, are quite unnoticeable, but it has some others louder and more attracting. It is strictly nocturnal and shy and probably breeds more commonly than suspected.

**SHORT-EARED OWL.** Salt marshes and grassy brackish marshes are its haunts on Long Island, and it may pass unnoticed in the thick

grass unless alarmed. It is more diurnal than some other species and may be observed flying along the marshes early and late and sometimes appears on dark days in the open. Recent records of successful broods come from the Jamaica Bay area, Wantagh, Massapequa, Moriches and Shinnecock, and these areas represent its more or less regular nesting grounds. It also breeds in a few places in eastern Suffolk County and possibly around the Sound. Turrell lists it only as a migrant in the Smithtown region.

**SAW-WHET OWL.** As a nesting species we include this bird only on the basis of a pair found breeding at Millers Place, 1879 (Helme), sixty-nine years ago.

**EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL.** This species has recently been reported from Oceanside and Wantagh and nests regularly at Seaford and Massapequa. It is regarded as rare at Oyster Bay, becoming more common eastward through Smithtown and Commack. It breeds in favorable oak-woods with reports as being common in the Lindenhurst and Mastic areas, also throughout the center of Long Island and south of the Peconic River to Hampton Bays. It nests in the Flanders area, at Sag Harbor, in the Northwest Woods, through the Hither Hills and at Montauk. A few breed at East Marion, but there have been no records for the past 50 years at Orient. We have no recent breeding records for either Gardiner's Island or Shelter Island.

**NIGHTHAWK.** The loud "peent" of the Nighthawk as it hurls itself adeptly through the sky, announces the presence of this bird during the breeding season. It was recorded in breeding season during 1946 at Coram, Manorville and at Quogue. Reports, within the past eight years, come as possibly nesting at Idlewild and we have June records of birds observed from the Flushing area. This bird has greatly decreased as a nesting species on Long Island, and there are apparently no records for Nassau County. Previously nesting commonly in the Orient region, it is rare or absent in recent years.

**CHIMNEY SWIFT.** Its erratic flight and chippering call can hardly be overlooked. It is widespread as a breeding bird over Long Island, except in extreme congested locations and areas along the outer strip. Its principal nesting habitat is unused chimneys and it is not known to breed in hollow trees in this region.

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD.** Although not nesting on the outer strip, the Ruby-throat may be found breeding elsewhere from Beechhurst eastward. It often selects a perch on a dry twig from which it darts away like a large bee. It is not a very common bird and both it and its beautiful little lichen-covered nest must usually be searched for in many localities.

**EASTERN BELTED KINGFISHER.** The rattling call of the Kingfisher is often one of the early notes of spring. It is a bird of waterways, well distributed over Long Island except along the outer strip, and nests in holes in banks where about six feet back in the tunnel it lays its six to eight white eggs.

**NORTHERN FLICKER.** This big, brownish, white-rumped, ground-inhabiting woodpecker is well distributed and well known. It breeds in cavities in trees, poles or buildings. It nests on the outer strip at



Jones Beach, being the only species of woodpecker known to breed away from the Long Island mainland.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. This beautiful woodpecker is rare on Long Island. It, like the rest, nests in hollow trees. Recent breeding records come from the Flushing area (Beechhurst) and from Baldwin. It is very erratic and irregular.

EASTERN HAIRY WOODPECKER. In the Oyster Bay region it is listed as uncommon, with one Cold Spring Harbor record. At Smithtown it is listed also as an uncommon breeder in deep woods. Breeding reports from Beechhurst, Hewlett, Woodmere and Baldwin do not include this species and it is not known to nest on the outer strip. Taken as a whole it is a rather rare breeding bird on Long Island compared to the Downy, and records of its breeding are well worthy of consideration in our lists. Recent ones come from Bayside and Mastic.

NORTHERN DOWNY WOODPECKER. This small counterpart of the Hairy Woodpecker is widely and commonly distributed over Long Island except on the outer strip where it is unknown. It is not a bird of the deep woods, but may breed in orchards and open situations. Like others of its family it uses a nesting hole.

KINGBIRD. Perhaps our most common and prominent flycatcher, the Kingbird prefers open country and the white-beaded border of its tail is a characteristic known to many boys as they tend their outdoor tasks. It is well distributed in suitable open areas over Long Island, breeding sparingly, locally on the outer strip. It is well known for its spectacular chasing of crows out of its nesting area.

NORTHERN CRESTED FLYCATCHER. This hole-nesting flycatcher is fond of snake skins for lining its nest, which may be found in groves of trees, swampy woodlands, orchards and sometimes even in our yards. Their shrill call, resembling a policeman's whistle, is a characteristic call over the wide area on Long Island in which they are common.

EASTERN PHOEBE. The nesting of this species is governed largely by available bridges and open buildings on the ledges of which they build their nests. During the 1946 season they were reported as nesting at Woodmere, in the West Hills, in the Smithtown region and at Mastic. It is listed as a tolerable common nesting species at Oyster Bay, only as a transient on the Orient peninsula. For some years a Phoebe nested at Massapequa inside an open cattle shed behind a wet cowyard which provided the necessary mud for nest building. Two recent reports of early June Phoebes on Shelter Island probably represent nesting birds.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER. Apparently the Acadian Flycatcher does not breed any longer on Long Island. Formerly it bred locally from Jamaica to Cold Spring Harbor along the North Shore and at Gardiner's Island. It is a bird of the Carolinian flora. In *Long Island Bird Notes* there is one record of a singing bird in June from the Oyster Bay region within five years, but no nesting evidence was found and it perhaps was a vagrant.

ALDER FLYCATCHER. There appears to be but one breeding locality recorded for this species on Long Island. It was reported as nesting

in Kissena Park (near Flushing) from 1939 to 1941. In 1945, singing birds were reported in June, but no nesting evidence was found and later the birds disappeared. The birds occupied a wet, weedy area interspersed with elderberry bushes and bushy willows, quite unlike their usual haunts in alder swamps.

**LEAST FLYCATCHER.** The Least Flycatcher is recognized as an uncommon to rare breeding bird on Long Island. In June, 1946, however, I heard the "chebec" call note of this little flycatcher in Woodbury and recorded four, at about a quarter of a mile intervals, and two more at Oyster Bay Cove. This is a remarkable report considering the statement by Turrell, 1939, that the species is unknown to breed in the Smithtown area, and Cruickshank, 1941, that it is a decidedly rare nesting bird on Long Island. From *Long Island Bird Notes* come June records from Flushing, Mill Neck and Manorville. It is reported as nesting in the Oyster Bay region and at Millers Place.

**EASTERN WOOD PEWEE.** The demure little Wood Pewee is a delightful summer resident of our open woodlands, and sometimes breeds in more open areas such as around secluded lawns and gardens where trees are common. It is widespread from Woodmere and Flushing eastward in such habitat, but is absent from the outer strip along our ocean beaches and in the large burned-over stunted tracts of pine barrens. It perches on a dead branch while its plaintive, clear-whistled "peewee", with variations, falls with pleasing tones on the ear of the listener. It is quite prominent in August when it is largely occupied leading about and feeding its well-grown young.

**PRAIRIE HORNED LARK.** This is a new breeding bird on Long Island. Since it was found nesting in the Jamaica Bay region in 1936, its continual spread has been phenomenal, with records for the open areas of Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, locally to Orient, Montauk and Gardiner's Island. It is a pleasing addition to our avifauna as it utters its twittering flight-song high over its grassy or sandy haunts.

**TREE SWALLOW.** The white breast and the iridescent, dark-blue back of the Tree Swallow flashes in the sunlight along our beaches and over our bays and ponds generally in proportion to the nesting boxes erected for its use. There has been a colony at Jones Beach for over fifteen years. About five years ago a few boxes were erected at Massapequa and the bird breeds there regularly. Consistent reports come from Mastic, Brookhaven and a few bred at Idlewild until the boxes were removed because of the proposed airport. With the erection of boxes in favorable habitat, they usually will appear to occupy them within a year or two, seeming to prefer coastal areas.

**BANK SWALLOW.** The Bank Swallow nests, as its name implies, in sandy or loamy cliffs or abrupt banks where it tunnels its nest-hole two or three feet to its grassy nest and four to six white eggs. It breeds at Jones Beach, but apparently is rare elsewhere along the South Shore. On the Sound it is more common, breeding on the cliffs, with about 25 pair reported at Lloyd's Neck, and nests locally eastward concentrating on the eastern end of Long Island.



ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW. The brownish throat and back of this bird is sometimes confused with the banded breast and the brownish back of the Bank Swallow, as they flash through the air. The Rough-winged Swallow nests in holes in bridges and under them as well as nesting in a burrow like the Bank Swallow. Breeding records are more numerous for this species in recent years, coming locally from Beechhurst to Shelter Island. Recent nesting reports come from both the North Shore and the South Shore, the largest numbers being reported along the Sound cliffs to East Marion. They do not appear to nest along the outer strip as does the Bank Swallow at Jones Beach. South Shore reports come from Lindenhurst and Patchogue and from the East Hampton area.

BARN SWALLOW. This bird does not regularly breed under eaves as does the Cliff or Eave Swallow, but inside buildings. It nests commonly over Long Island usually where open sheds, barns and out-buildings are available. It also nests along the outer strip at Jones Beach and under the drawbridges along the causeways. The Cliff Swallow in the northeast uses the eaves of barns almost exclusively as a nesting site. It formerly bred on Long Island, but has not been known to do so since 1904.

PURPLE MARTIN. This big swallow nests in multiple bird houses usually preferring areas near water with large open meadows available for hunting winged insects. Perhaps the best-known colony is at Seaford where the birds breed regularly in three or four large boxes in competition with English Sparrows and Starlings. Martin colonies are found here and there over eastern Long Island, regular reports coming from the Mastic and Speonk areas.

BLUE JAY. Little search need be made for this well-known bird from Brooklyn eastward over most of Long Island. Although known as a rascal for its nest robbing activities, it is a handsome one. It breeds occasionally in rather confined areas, but is absent from the outer strip and most of the Orient peninsula and Gardiner's Island. It is rare or uncommon in the large, scrubby, burned-over tracts and in the poorer vegetated pine barrens of Suffolk County away from dwellings. There was a large westward drift of these birds after the devastating 1938 hurricane which struck eastern Long Island with great severity.

EASTERN CROW. Crows accepting protection, nest in some of our city parks and have been reported breeding in both Prospect Park and Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn. The Eastern Crow is regarded as a common and an abundant permanent resident at Oyster Bay and Smithtown respectively, and the Fish Crow is regarded as tolerably common in the Oyster Bay region and not uncommon in the Smithtown area. The Eastern Crow reportedly nests along the outer strip in a few places, quite unlike its smaller relation the Fish Crow, which, contrary to its name, nests more inland. Both rob birds' nests, the Fish Crow appearing to more diligently hunt the nests of smaller birds.

FISH CROW. Although resorting to large roosts from autumn into late winter, crows spread out in summer and nest here and there in

our woodlands. Fish Crows breed in scattered locations from Brooklyn to Montauk. See Eastern Crow.

**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE.** Little bands of Chickadees, uttering their cheery notes, register throughout our summer woodlands as they lead their young about and are widely distributed in wooded areas of some extent. They usually have two broods and breed in holes. According to Turrell, in the Smithtown region, they are usually found nesting in birch woods and swamps.

**NORTHERN WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH.** This acrobatic bird utters its nasal "yank, yank" as it runs head-down with ease on the search for insects to feed their young while nesting in some tree cavity. They are generally spread through the wooded areas of eastern Nassau County south to and including Massapequa. They also breed in the West and Dix Hills and in the Smithtown region, but are less common in most areas on eastern Long Island and are not known to breed on the tips of the Orient and Montauk peninsulas. The Tufted Titmouse has not been known to breed on Long Island for many years.

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.** This little Nuthatch breeds in the Canadian zone. Only one report substantiates its status as a Long Island breeding bird and no nest was found. With a mate nearby, Roy Latham collected, on June 15, 1929, a female at Orient in which "the ovaries contained the ruptured capsules from which the eggs had been developed" (Cruickshank, 1941).

**BROWN CREEPER.** We cannot definitely claim this bird as a nesting species, but a pair summered at East Marion in 1923 and was believed to have nested. Also one individual was observed in Orient, June 18, 1921, its behavior suggesting a breeding bird. Along with the above, Cruickshank, 1941, cites a number of records in the New York City region, and he found a nest with young in the Van Cortlandt Park swamp, in Bronx County, May 27, 1926. He reports the nest as "placed under the loose bark of a tree in damp or flooded woodlands". Its call note is a fine "screep". With these thoughts in mind, some field work in this direction may definitely establish this species as one of our breeding birds.

**HOUSE WREN.** The staccato chatter of this bird is rather consistent throughout the summer about our homes and gardens, especially where bird boxes are erected for their use. It is found nesting from Flushing (Beechhurst), Woodmere and the Jamaica Bay area eastward becoming less abundant, and on the Orient and Montauk peninsulas it is known chiefly as a transient. It is regarded as tolerably common in the Oyster Bay area and as a common summer resident in Smithtown.

**CAROLINA WREN.** Easily recognized by its loud whistled "wheedle, wheedle, wheedle", this largest of our native wrens breeds principally on eastern Long Island, being more or less resident. Because of nesting on the most northerly boundary of its range, it fluctuates in numbers, decreasing after severe winters so that an accurate listing of its breeding range is not very consistent over a period of years. In recent years most of our nesting records come from Shelter Island, the Orient peninsula and from Gardiner's Island. It has been reported as nesting at Woodmere and Idlewild. We get very per-



sistent reports from Mastic and the Port Jefferson area. At Smithtown, Turrell reported two pair at Baiting Hollow during 1928 and a pair at Nissequogue.

**LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN.** This species breeds among the cat-tails and phragmites, and in the high-tide bushes (Iva) which line the ditches and grow profusely in many of our salt marshes. It is very common as a breeding bird from Jamaica Bay eastward to Oak Beech and less so eastward to Shinnecock and from there locally to Montauk. It is very much restricted or absent on the east end of both the Orient and Montauk peninsulas, perhaps due to the annual burning over of the salt meadows causing a dearth of dry grasses for a suitable nesting habitat.

**SHORT-BILLED MARSH WREN.** The rather loud and persistent "chap-chap-chap-ch-ch-chchchrrrrr" of this small wren identifies the male which sings very often throughout the day, and at times well through the night, in the damp marshy meadows, bordering the uplands, along the South Shore. Although reported to have a breeding range from Idlewild locally eastward to the Mastic area, we have no recent nesting records from the latter, and the Idlewild location is now largely covered by the new airport. Recent records come almost entirely from Massapequa, with several breeding pairs reported yearly. Summering records also come from bordering uplands east of Freeport and from Lindenhurst.

**CATBIRD.** This is another very common bird which is well known even to small children, who in many cases imitate its cat-like calls. It is widely distributed in the thickets, and nests even more commonly than the Brown Thrasher in the dense backyard shrubbery. It is less common in the poorer sections of the pine barrens, and a local summer resident along the outer strip. Although the Mockingbird was reported as nesting on Long Island by Giraud a century ago, there have been no nesting records here for a great many years. A report of a pair suspected of breeding at Montauk in 1934 was not substantiated.

**BROWN THRASHER.** The Thrasher needs no introduction from the time its twice-repeated phrases are heard in spring until late fall. It is widespread in our thickets and in many cases nests around our houses.

**EASTERN ROBIN.** The Robin is one of our most common and best-known summer residents and is a great favorite with many because of its cheery song and beneficial habits. It is widespread over Long Island from Brooklyn eastward, being less common away from houses in the scrubby barrens, and only breeds locally on the outer strip.

**WOOD THRUSH.** The sweet organ-tones of the Wood Thrush come to us out of the rich woodlands and is especially impressive at the close of the day. Its excited "tut, tut, tut" identifies the species once learned. It is absent where the woods are sparse and dry, in the barrens and burned over areas, and on the outer strip. Occasionally it nests along the wooded borders of our lawns and gardens. In desired habitat it is widespread over Long Island contingent with the breeding areas. Where favorable areas are comparatively infrequent

it may occur irregularly, as at Orient, where Latham reported it several years ago as "the first nesting here in fifteen years".

**EASTERN HERMIT THRUSH.** Like hymns of praise during the peaceful twilight hours come the beautiful strains of the Hermit Thrush, the sweetest singing bird in the Northeast. Strangely, its Suffolk County breeding location the only one known in the entire New York City region, except possibly in the mountains of New Jersey. On a survey of this species in 1946, I found it prefers a good sprinkling of fairly large pitch pines with an under cover of scrub oaks ranging from about breast high to twelve or fifteen feet. Another habitat occupied by singing birds, were open vistas of pitch pines with its only under cover the glossy green carpet of bearberry (*Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi*).

Apparently they do not care for tall, mature scrub oaks dominating the area, reviving burned-over tracts, or areas of spindly, second-growth pines. In favorable tracts a dozen or more singing males may be heard. Their range is sparingly from western Suffolk County, with a nest found at Happaugue in 1939, eastward to Coram, Manorville, Quogue and possibly Mastic (no recent reports), and on the Montauk peninsula in favorable locations.

**WILSON'S THRUSH; VEERY.** The Veery's haunts consist of moist, thick-foliaged woodlands with an abundance of second growth. Here, in the emerald light shining from the outside world, we more often hear its song, a silvery downward tremolo, then catch a glimpse of its retiring russet back or faint, tawny breast-markings. It is rare and local as a breeding species on Long Island, recent records coming from the North Shore, principally from Manhasset to Cold Spring Harbor and possibly Smithtown, and along the South Shore from Woodmere, Meadow Brook, Seaford, Massapequa and Oakdale. It also breeds on Shelter Island.

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD.** The winsome Bluebird is one of our favorite birds and, since the introduction of the English Sparrow and Starling, is all too uncommon with infrequent breeding records coming from Nassau County in recent years. It is a rare summer resident in the Oyster Bay area, but a common summer resident at Smithtown. It breeds in a number of localities in the Manorville, Moriches, Mastic areas, on the Montauk peninsula and on Shelter Island.

**CEDAR WAXWING.** This species nests late with egg dates ranging from mid-June into mid-September. Recent summering records come from Oyster Bay and Massapequa in Nassau County. It is reportedly more common in Suffolk County and has been recorded as nesting recently in several locations, being more consistently reported in the Orient region.

**STARLING.** Since sixty Starlings were liberated on March 16, 1890, in Central Park, New York City, and since the species was first noted on Gardiner's Island in 1908, it has increased until it is now very well known and widely distributed over Long Island.

**WHITE-EYED VIREO.** This species is common along the South Shore on the mainland, also along the Sound and is occasional inland, preferring lowland thickets and those bordering ponds and streams. It is common at Massapequa, but is comparatively rare on the eastern



end of Long Island. It does not appear to nest on the outer strip, even in the large brushy thickets at Jones Beach.

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO.** All our recent summering records come from the North Shore. It appears to be a rather regular, but local, summer resident at Glen Cove, Oyster Bay Cove and at Huntington. It is a rare to uncommon summer resident at Smithtown and has been reported recently in mid-June at Orient. At Oyster Bay Cove where I found two or three singing males in June, 1946, they were apparently partial to enormous native elms and were located by their rich, deliberate song of two or three notes.

**RED-EYED VIREO.** Because of its short repeated phrases, this bird is sometimes called "the Preacher". It is very well known as a common summer resident of our deciduous woods and shaded areas of our lawns and gardens. It is widespread in such habitat over Long Island.

**EASTERN WARBLING VIREO.** Although a few records come from the North Shore as far east as Huntington, we have no reports from Smithtown. It is a rare or casual summer resident at Oyster Bay. Rather regular nesting reports appear from the Plandome, Manhasset and Roslyn areas. From Bayside east to Roslyn is perhaps the best location in which to look for this small vireo and listen to its rich Purple Finch-like warble high in the large elms or other deciduous trees which it is partial to. South Shore records of nesting are very rare and irregular with one from Idlewild, a possible nesting at Massapequa and a few reports from East Hampton.

**BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.** This little zebra-striped bird creeps over the inner branches and limbs of our trees. It occurs over much of the extensive oak woods of Long Island, but is rather uncommon on the Orient peninsula no doubt because of the large agricultural tracts displacing much woodland.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER.** This species is a rare and local breeding bird along the North Shore. There apparently are extremely few recent records except in the Cold Spring Harbor region. It perhaps breeds sparingly in other parts of the Carolinian flora from Port Jefferson westward and a record of a late spring bird comes from St. James.

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER.** In recent years this species has spread eastward into Suffolk County more commonly. It breeds rather abundantly in Nassau and western Suffolk Counties and is partial to scrubby fields and woodland borders. It nests from Woodmere and Bayside eastward and over the main part of Long Island with reports scattered to Montauk and Gardiner's Island.

**LAWRENCE'S WARBLER.** This rare hybrid between the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers has been reported as nesting in northern Queens County and a more recent record comes of one observed along the banks of Meadow Brook (north of Freeport). This bird sang like a Blue-winged Warbler and associated with a female of that species. In all probability it nested as it remained throughout the breeding season.

**PARULA WARBLER.** On July 4, 1946, this species was re-established as a breeding bird in the New York City region with a record,

by this writer, of a pair of Parula Warblers feeding two or more fledgling young at Oakdale. It was once reported as a locally common summer resident on Long Island, decreasing in numbers with the disappearance of the Usnea lichen which at one time hung on the tree branches. Previous to 1946, the last Long Island breeding report came from Hither Woods in 1938. Although the 1946 birds were out of the nest when discovered, the parents previously had been observed entering a heavy concentration of spruce fronds caused by the interlocking of a toppled Norway spruce against an erect one.

**EASTERN YELLOW WARBLER.** This species is sometimes called the "wild canary". It is fond of shrubbery and open areas along the edges of swamps and ponds, especially on the bay edges and along the Sound on the Long Island mainland. It is common at Jones Beach and in other shrub-covered areas along the outer strip. Its sprightly song is a characteristic sound in early summer coming out of the poison ivy thickets of these areas.

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER.** This species has been recorded by this writer as nesting for eight consecutive years around High Hill in the West or Manetto Hills, and this is perhaps the best area to hear the male singing its attractive little four-noted song in the nesting season. It has also been recorded from Half Hollow Hills where three or four singing males were heard on a day's trip in mid-June a few years ago. Elsewhere, it has been reported as a rare summer resident in the Oyster Bay area, and as local in the Smithtown area.

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER.** This species breeds rather consistently throughout Long Island in dry woods, or in bordering woodlands associated with brier patches and second-growth. It is well sprinkled in such habitat over Long Island except on the extreme western end and along the South Shore eastward to Massapequa. It also breeds on Gardiner's Island. Favorable habitat is somewhat restricted and it is less common on the Orient peninsula.

**NORTHERN PINE WARBLER.** The musical trill of the Pine Warbler sounds in the major growth of pines or in the mixed pines and oaks as it breeds over the widespread barrens of Long Island. Reports of Nassau County nestings are sporadical. During 1946, I found it regular in favorable tracts from Lindenhurst and Commack eastward in many areas to Quogue, Flanders and locally on the Montauk peninsula.

**PRAIRIE WARBLER.** The ascending trill of the male sounds over the fire-blackened areas of our pine barrens and it is sometimes the only bird-song heard in such locations. This is primarily a pine barrens species, with often four or five males to be heard singing at once in the dry second-growth of these and surrounding areas.

**OVEN-BIRD.** Because of its low-perching and ground-walking habits and its loud reiterated "teacher" song, the "teacher bird" is prominent in the drier oak woods which provide a suitable stratum of dead leaves in which it builds its oven-like nest. Anyone living near a fairly extensive area of such woods should identify this species easily and also listen for its famous flight song.



LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH. Our recent breeding records come from Mill Neck, Cold Spring Harbor and Mt. Sinai, and it is reportedly occasional to Greenport. The species appears to favor streams with wide bottom lands and swampy borders vegetated with the ranker growths. Supposedly a lover of dashing, crystal streams, it does not seem to nest along the many clear, pebbly brooks on the South Shore. The Kentucky and the Hooded Warblers cannot be included in our list of breeding birds because no nesting evidence was found in one or two cases of males found in breeding season.

NORTHERN YELLOW-THROAT. This species is perhaps our most common warbler. Its "witchity, witchity, witchity" coming out of the thickets identifies the male almost as fully as the black mask on the side of his face and the bright yellow throat. They are widespread in the damp undergrowth and thickets even in such places as on the outer strip.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT. This largest of our warblers mimics, whistles and disports itself in clownish actions in the dense second-growth and bushy thickets where it breeds. Although reported as breeding on Gardiner's Island, recent records come from western Long Island: Beechhurst, Manhasset, Woodbury and Massapequa.

REDSTART. In our region the Redstart breeds most commonly on Shelter Island. Along the North Shore it is regular in the Port Jefferson, Mt. Sinai area and at Shoreham, and ranges irregularly westward to Queens County. It seems to favor rich woods with occasional tree-supported grape vines. Away from Shelter Island, on eastern Long Island, the bird is comparatively uncommon; recent reports come from Springs, Orient and a few elsewhere.

ENGLISH SPARROW. This bird is well known in city and country, although there is somewhat of a decrease in recent years. With an awakened interest in the maintenance of feeding stations, these adaptable birds nest about our houses and are fed in the back yards in lieu of inhabiting the diminishing numbers of manure piles since the advent of the automobile.

BOBOLINK. The rollicking song of the Bobolink is chiefly linked up with the damp meadow. Although a few breed on the Hempstead Plains, most of the nesting records come from the South Shore in the bordering upland areas. There appear to be no recent nesting records from the North Shore of western Long Island. They breed from the Jamaica Bay area, locally eastward, to Quogue and sparingly to Orient. This species has decreased in numbers in recent years on Long Island. They nest rather regularly at Massapequa and east of Freeport.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK, EASTERN RED-WING. Both of these species inhabit bordering marsh lands, the Meadowlark nesting in the grassy areas and the Red-wing in the wetter marshes and swamps. The Meadowlark also nests in the grassy fields. Both are well known and widely distributed.

ORCHARD ORIOLE. The full rich song of this species is heard all too seldom in recent years. Some thirty or forty years ago it was a rather common breeding bird on Long Island. Today practically all of our summering records come from the North Shore: Elmhurst

to Northport and rather regularly and sparingly eastward. There are no recent nesting reports from Massapequa, although common there some years ago. A 1942 summering record comes from Wantagh.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE. This beautiful Oriole needs little introduction being well distributed over our cultivated areas: gardens, lawns and tree-bordered roadsides where it hangs its pouch-shaped nest.

GRACKLE, COWBIRD. These common birds are widespread over Long Island, Grackles preferring evergreens in which to nest and Cowbirds depositing their eggs in the nests of other birds. The Bronzed Grackle breeds farther north. Because of plumage variation of Grackles breeding on Long Island and southward, those birds called the Purple Grackle in our ornithological works appear at the present to have an uncertain status as to identification.

SCARLET TANAGER. Singing like a hoarse Robin, the scarlet and black of the male shows in the tops of our tall oaks where this species prefer to nest. Although widespread over central Long Island and nesting locally eastward to Shelter Island, it is a rare breeder west of Bellaire.

CARDINAL. This species successfully nested in Prospect Park recently and has possibly nested at Far Rockaway and at Massapequa. It has also been reported rather consistently from Roslyn and other North Shore areas.

ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK. We have no definite records of this species having recently nested on Long Island where it is usually comparatively uncommon during migration. It is a bird that should be searched for, because of its choice of leafy habitat making it hard to find and because its musical carol may be taken for that of the Robin.

INDIGO BUNTING. During a survey in 1946 this species was found regularly and rather commonly over the central part of Long Island through the West, Dix and Half Hollow Hills, eastward through Smithtown and the Mt. Sinai area, and southward to Yaphank, Manorville and Mastic. Records extend locally and sparingly westward to Manhasset and eastward to Gardiner's Island. Occasionally an influx, as in 1943, gives us summering birds along the South Shore. The Dickcissel bred commonly on Long Island up to 1842, was very rare by 1875, and there are no records of possible breeding birds since 1890.

EASTERN PURPLE FINCH. This is a rare breeding species on Long Island with records of a few pairs extending from Sands Point to Miller Place along the North Shore and from Mastic to East Hampton along the South Shore. It seems to prefer mixed deciduous and coniferous growth.

HOUSE FINCH. This is a new breeding bird for Long Island, five being discovered in April, 1941, at Babylon, by this writer. This number by 1946 had increased to some fifty birds. There are smaller colonies at Westbury and at Hewlett. This western United States species, mysteriously appearing, seems to stand introduction very well and, if undisturbed, no doubt will spread over considerable territory.



EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH. Introduced in 1878, at Hoboken, New Jersey, it was observed by this writer's parents in 1910, at Massapequa. Regular reports since 1925 include this area, Garden City and along the South Shore from Massapequa to Baldwin. The species apparently has had a restriction of range within the past decade with all recent nesting records coming from the vicinity of Massapequa.

EASTERN GOLDFINCH. Its canary-like song in its late nesting season is heard usually in open country (except on the outer strip). It is widespread, being reported as nesting from Flushing eastward in favorable territory.

RED CROSSBILL. Of the two nesting records for the New York region, one is from Long Island: Millers Place, April 10, 1883 (Helme).

RED-EYED TOWHEE. This very well known bird is partial to dry woods with patches of dense undergrowth. It is widespread, even breeding on the outer strip, and its sharp "Chewink" is a very familiar sound over most of Long Island.

EASTERN SAVANNAH SPARROW. This species has increased as a breeding bird on Long Island in recent years. It has infiltrated the grassy areas of fill, caused by the construction of the ocean boulevards and causeways, and occurs also in grassy situations locally from Jamaica Bay to Montauk, on Gardiner's Island and around Orient. There also appears to be one or two records inland north of Wantagh.

EASTERN GRASSHOPPER SPARROW. Its grasshopper-like song is heard in large grassy fields, old dry pastures and on the plains. In such areas it is rather widespread eastward over Long Island from Beechhurst and Woodmere.

EASTERN HENSLOW'S SPARROW. This shy sparrow utters its "tisllick" song from our damp meadows, bordering the uplands, along the South Shore. During the past two decades reports have come from Idlewild, Merrick, Massapequa, Lindenhurst, Babylon and farther east from Mastic, Speonk and Quogue. Fill eliminated the Idlewild area and now breeding reports are limited from Merrick eastward with regular reports coming from Massapequa and east of the Santapogue River near the Lindenhurst, Babylon border.

SHARP-TAILED SPARROW. A breeder in the drier salt marshes, these sparrows are widely spread over such areas nesting along the South Shore to Montauk and to Orient on the North Shore in the larger more favorable marshes. Fill has eliminated much breeding territory for this species and the following, especially in Queens and Nassau Counties.

NORTHERN SEASIDE SPARROW. This species breeds commonly in the wet marshes from Jamaica Bay eastward to Fire Island on many bay islands. They nest only to Freeport and locally at Wantagh along the north side of the bays. At Patchogue suitable territory reappears along the ocean beach and they are found nesting eastward locally to Moriches and Shinnecock. They are not known to breed on the Orient peninsula or along the Sound in recent years.

EASTERN VESPER SPARROW. This species nests most commonly on Long Island around the Hempstead Plains. Recent reports come from Lindenhurst and locally eastward. It is an open-country species.

EASTERN CHIPPING SPARROW. This bird, like the Song Sparrow, is well known, and little need be said as to its distribution and habitat. Unlike the Song Sparrow, it is rare or unknown on the outer strip as a breeding species.

FIELD SPARROW. The sweet plaintive whistle of the Field Sparrow floats over the wild, overgrown pasture lots with charming effect. It breeds over most of Long Island where such territory exists as well as in tree-bordering fields and hedgerows.

SWAMP SPARROW. This species is a rather local breeder on extreme western Long Island being reported principally from the Jamaica Bay area, Woodmere and from Flushing. Elsewhere it is regarded as an irregular nesting species with reports coming from a few locations along the South Shore and at Greenport. Most Long Island breeding areas are in or near salt or brackish marshes.

SONG SPARROW. This species is perhaps our most companionable and beloved bird. It is widespread over Long Island, except in the congested areas and deep woods. It is a common breeding species on the outer strip. It nests in grassy situations in scrubby open territory and around houses and farm lands where its lively song is one of the first harbingers of spring.





## CHAPTER XXX

### *The Birth of Nassau County*

THE idea of dividing Queens County into urban and suburban areas did not, as was long generally supposed, stem from within New York City. As early as 1850 residents of the county were discussing the feasibility of such a division. By 1858 the matter had taken shape as a definite issue and in 1869 Queens County's Assemblyman Pearsall introduced a bill in the State Legislature calling for the creation of a county comprised of Queens' three easterly towns, Hempstead, Oyster Bay and North Hempstead, and the Suffolk County towns of Huntington (of which Babylon was then a part), Smithtown and Islip.

The matter waxed warm between proponents and opponents and finally in 1876 Assemblyman D. Cock introduced a bill providing for the erection of "Ocean" County from the three easterly towns of Queens, later amended to include Huntington and also Babylon, which had been created in 1872, and changing the name of the proposed county to Nassau.

About the middle of March, 1876, the Committee on Civil Divisions held a public hearing at which arguments pro and con were advanced by a large delegation of citizens of Long Island. In support of the proposal were such prominent men as, from Oyster Bay, George S. Downing, supervisor; James Willetts, James Titus, James Ludlum, E. M. Lincoln and O. S. Jones; from North Hempstead, Samuel Willetts, supervisor; Stephen Taber, John M. Clark and Isaac H. Cocks, and from Babylon, Ex-Judge John R. Reid, D. S. S. Sammis and Charles T. Duryea.

The opposition was headed by John M. Crane, W. S. Cogswell, Herman U. Rider, John O'Donnell, all of Jamaica; former Congressman Henry A. Reeves of Greenport, David Carll of Huntington and Elbert Carll, supervisor of the new town of Babylon. There was a second and final hearing later in March after which the measure was killed in committee. *The Long Island Democrat* of May 22, 1877, printed an item to the effect that Assemblyman Jones had had the Nassau bill placed on third reading and that the scheme to divide the counties of Suffolk and Queens had failed by a vote of 42 to 56.

The project, however, refused to die at the hands of an unfavorable legislature and for another decade and a half it was a popular subject for public debate and private discussion throughout Long Island. It took the ravenous territorial appetite of the city of New York to finally revive the matter in official circles. The westerly part of Queens, as well as Kings County in its entirety, became a part of the city in 1898. Immediately following the election of George Wallace to the State Assembly, representing the Third Assembly District of Queens, he was asked to introduce legislation to establish a new county of the suburban area of that county.



On January 22, 1898, a public meeting of citizens of Oyster Bay, North Hempstead and Hempstead towns was held in Allen's Hotel, Mineola, to further the plan. Benjamin D. Hicks of North Hempstead was chosen chairman and Archer B. Wallace of Hempstead, son of the Assemblyman, secretary of this meeting. A resolution was presented by J. B. Coles Tappen of Oyster Bay and adopted as follows: "Resolved, that it is the sense of this meeting that the Towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay withdraw from the County of Queens, and that a new County to include the said towns be formed."

In the discussion which followed there was a diversity of opinion as witness the sentiments expressed by the following citizens: William W. Cocks, later Congressman, a resident of North Hempstead, favored annexation of the three towns to Suffolk County. John Duryea of Oyster Bay agreed. Fred Herzog, Jr., objected as did William G. Miller and Albert W. Seaman of Hempstead, while Edward N. Townsend presented statistics as to area, population and wealth of the three towns as evidence that they might themselves very well comprise a separate county.

Fred Herzog, Sr., of Oyster Bay wanted to have Huntington and Babylon towns included in the new county and Charles E. Shepard, editor of *The Long Islander* of Huntington, declared that the people of his town would favor such a step. However, Mr. Tappen, whose resolution was under discussion, believed that this might complicate the matter and work to its disadvantage in the legislature.

John H. Carll suggested that the three suburban towns of Queens might better request annexation by New York City than to try to paddle their own canoe as a separate county, while D. N. Munger of Oyster Bay, referring to the Suffolk County towns, said that the proposed county should consider not so much what might be taken in as to what should be left out. However, the following historic resolution was offered by James H. Ludlum of Oyster Bay and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it is for the best interest of the citizens of the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay to withdraw from the county of Queens, and

Whereas, such withdrawal can best be accomplished by the erection of a new county out of that part of the county of Queens which lies without the borough of Queens, and

Whereas, the expense of preparing a bill to create a new county should be borne equally by the citizens of the three towns aforesaid, therefore be it

Resolved, that it is the sense of this mass meeting of the citizens of the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay that Supervisors Smith, Denton and Underhill be requested to obtain authority from their respective town boards to expend a sum, not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars for each town, in defraying any expenses that may be incurred in the drafting and preparation of such bills as may be necessary to carry into effect the desire of the

people to have a county free from any entangling alliances with the Great City of New York;

Resolved, that two citizens from each of the towns without the borough of Queens and one citizen at large from these towns who shall be chairman of the committee be appointed by the Chair, who together with the supervisors of said towns ex officio shall be a committee of ten with power to select a name for the proposed new county from those names suggested today, and also to employ counsel to draft a bill creating a new county;

Resolved, that upon the committee's approval of said bill our representatives at Albany, Senator Kohler and Assemblyman Wallace, be requested to introduce the same in the Legislature and to employ all honorable means to secure its enactment into law at this session of Legislature.

The committee appointed to carry out the provisions of this resolution consisted of P. Halstead Scudder, Oyster Bay, chairman; Lott Vandewater and William G. Miller, Hempstead; Joseph H. Bogart and Wilbur Lewis, North Hempstead, and James B. Pearsall and James H. Ludlum, Oyster Bay. The names suggested for the new county and those who proposed them were: Matinecock, by Edward N. Townsend of Hempstead; Norfolk, by J. B. Coles Tappen of Oyster Bay; Bryant, by William G. Miller of Hempstead, and Nassau, by Archer B. Wallace of Hempstead.

The above committee convened Saturday morning, February 5, 1898, at Pettit's Hotel in Jamaica and there adopted the draft of a bill for immediate presentation to the Legislature. The name of Nassau for the new county was also here adopted by the committee—an appropriate choice as Long Island had been named Nassau Island by an act of the Colonial Assembly on April 10, 1693. Assemblyman George Wallace introduced the bill on February 17, 1898, and during the final week of the 121st session it passed both houses as Chapter 588 of the Laws of 1898. It was signed by Governor Frank S. Black April 27, to become effective January 1, 1899.

The law provided that the county seat should be located within one mile of the Long Island Rail Road station at either Hempstead, Mineola or Hicksville, these being located respectively in the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay. The assessed valuation of the new county was approximately \$29,600,000 and its population 42,000. On April 5th the following were elected town supervisors to comprise, beginning January 1, 1899, the first Board of Supervisors of Nassau County: Smith Cox, Hempstead; Augustus Denton, North Hempstead, and William R. Jones, Oyster Bay.

When on October 4, 1898, the first Republican county convention was held in Firemen's Hall, Mineola, under the auspices of the Republican county committee, of which Ex-Senator John Lewis Childs had been named chairman, the latter's slate for nominations was strenuously opposed by William J. Youngs, Republican State Committeeman and District Attorney of Queens County. Childs succeeded



in naming William G. Miller of Freeport as chairman of the convention and in nominating Assemblyman George Wallace of Freeport for County Judge and Surrogate over Youngs' candidate, Robert A. Davidson of Oyster Bay. The other nominations were: for District Attorney, Edward Cromwell of Glen Cove; for County Treasurer, Henry M. W. Eastman of Roslyn; for County Clerk, Thomas Patterson of Mineola; for Superintendent of Poor, George D. Smith of Freeport, and for Sheriff, William H. Wood of Glen Cove.



*Breezing the Horses, Mineola Fair Grounds*

The Democratic county convention, held at Mineola on October 6, nominated without contest the following slate: for County Judge and Surrogate, Robert Seabury of Hempstead; for District Attorney, James P. Nieman of Lynbrook; for County Clerk, Thomas B. Seaman of Wantagh; for County Treasurer, Elbert Hageman of Oyster Bay; for Superintendent of Poor, Thomas J. McKee of Port Washington, and for Sheriff, Josiah L. Pearsall of North Hempstead.

At the general election of November 8, 1898, the Democrats captured the two most important county offices, County Judge-Surrogate and District Attorney, although the political complexion of the new county was undoubtedly strongly Republican, especially since Nassau's first citizen, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, had become the Republican candidate for Governor. That the future President's sentiments were not entirely with the dominant local faction of his party was implied

shortly after his election as Governor when he appointed William J. Youngs, who had opposed Childs' leadership, to be his confidential secretary at Albany. This appointment, nevertheless, by removing Youngs from the local arena, did much to solidify Nassau's Republican ranks.

At this election preference was shown by the voters in all three towns for Mineola as the county seat and here on January 3, 1899, the Board of Supervisors organized by choosing Augustus Denton chairman. The matter of naming a clerk to the Board, however, was postponed after five ballots had failed to break a three-way tie between Monroe S. Wood, J. Seymour Snedeker and Frederick Herzog, Jr. Not until six days later was Snedeker finally chosen.

The Board, at its organization meeting, designated the Mineola Fire House as chambers for the Supreme, County and Surrogate's courts, adopted a county seal and flag and fixed all official salaries at the maximum statutory amounts except that of Sheriff which, at \$2000, was \$500 below the limit. The Surrogate's clerk received a salary of \$1500 and that office was allowed \$800 for additional help, while a county stenographer-librarian was appointed at \$1000.

During this first meeting of the Board a telegram was read from Queens County Treasurer Charles L. Phipps: "Happy New Year. May the coming years fulfill the bright promises of Nassau County's birth." Seven days later the Board created a bond issue amounting to \$250,000 which it officially designated as Nassau County Building Bond Series One.

Thus less than fifty years ago was born what has since become the wealthiest of the State's counties of suburban or rural character, and the first New York county to operate under its own charter. Between the erection of Nassau County, January 1, 1899, and the adoption of its charter, January 1, 1938, its growth in population, assessed valuation and importance was such as to make necessary a more modern form of government, the creation of which is described in the next chapter.





## CHAPTER XXXI

### *The Nassau County Charter\**

J. RUSSEL SPRAGUE

#### I. BACKGROUND

WHEN Nassau County was created in 1899 it was created under a form of government which existed in England at the time Oliver Cromwell may have wallowed through muddy roads in high boots. This was the form of county government brought to our New England Colonies and continued almost to date. This form of government had been supplemented with a patchwork of special and general laws intended to shape it to meet the growing needs of Nassau County. Some governmental functions were administered by the county, others by the three towns which were the three major political or municipal subdivisions of the county. Throughout these three towns were sixty-three villages, two cities and many suburban communities or unincorporated areas. The villages had their form of government distinguished between themselves only by the description first, second and third class. The two cities likewise had their respective forms of government under their respective charters. The other communities or unincorporated areas were mainly administered by Special Districts supervised by their respective Town Boards.

This old form of county government, even with the assistance of special and general laws, was not adequate to meet the demands placed upon it. The demands for the county governmental services and physical improvements reasonably could not be met.

Nassau County was created in 1899 from that portion of Queens County not included in the incorporation of the Greater City of New York. The population of Nassau County at that time was a little in excess of 50,000. The Federal Census for 1930 reported the population to be in excess of 300,000 and for 1940 to be in excess of 400,000. The advent of the industries for World War II increased it to an estimated 500,000. Nassau County between the years 1900 and 1930 was the fastest growing county of all counties in the United States.

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\* *Editor's Note:* A biography of the Hon. J. Russel Sprague, the author of this chapter, is included in this History of Long Island.

Mr. Sprague has divided this chapter into the divisions (1) Background or Need for Changes in the County Government, (2) A Charter is Patterned, (3) Preparing the Charter, (4) Getting Ready for the Charter, (5) Changes Made Under the Charter, and (6) Some Results Under the Charter.

Nassau County had the services of Mr. Sprague during a critical period of its history. Mr. Sprague's own background of experience, his ability to evaluate problems, select and inspire workers, and to plan for the future County needs are shown by the results achieved.

A philosophy of government, an understanding of his times, human sympathy, a sense of humor, an ability to focus attention and obtain action upon problems, an ability to bring individuals to a common meeting ground, a desire to share his laurels, and the leadership of the author, Mr. Sprague, are patent in this chapter.

Mr. Sprague is the first County Executive of Nassau County and has four times been elected to that responsible office.



The great increase of population from about 50,000 in 1900 to more than 300,000 in 1930 was not distributed evenly throughout the County of Nassau. There were centers where the population was heavier than in other parts of the county such as in the Branch, (Rockaway peninsula), along the South Shore, through the backbone of the county and along the North Shore. Villages such as Rockville Centre, Freeport and Hempstead each had a population in excess of 15,000 individuals. Unincorporated areas or communities had large populations and at least one, Baldwin, had a population equal to that of the larger villages.

When people gather together in numbers they create problems for each other. Their very number presents a demand for new physical improvements, for schools and governmental services.

When the county was created in 1899 and enjoyed a comparatively small population well scattered over its geographical area, these problems were few. The large population, implanted in a brief space of time, created problems of government in a most acute form. Moreover, the new population was not evenly distributed; there were numerous "centers". Not only had roads to be improved but rights of way had to be secured for new or additional roads and for widening existing roads. These cost money. Public welfare, health, sewage and sanitation problems could only be solved by spending money. Schools had to be erected on land which was first purchased with taxpayers' money; a public general hospital had to be built; a public tuberculosis sanitarium had to be built. Equipment had to be purchased; a public works department had to be set up; public buildings had to be erected. Governmental functions for services had to be established and then expanded. The preservation of records such as those of the County Clerk required additional facilities. The courts including the County, Surrogate's and Supreme Court experienced increased activities. A County Police Department had to be set up. The District Attorney's Office was compelled to meet a greater need for its services. All of these items cost money: They not only cost money to set up but they also cost money to maintain.

This picture of a county rapidly evolving from a rural area into a suburban area at a tremendous rate of growth, with consequent demands for governmental improvements and services, was blackened by a further problem. It followed the financial crisis of 1929 and presented the problem of unemployment and relief, regulated by Federal and State laws but requiring financial assistance on the part of Nassau County.

There also existed and still exists throughout the many communities within Nassau County a community pride and a genuine desire on the part of residents of such communities to participate in certain aspects of their respective local governments. Such communities were the two cities, the incorporated villages and the unincorporated areas within each of the three towns. Many residents thought of government as being in their Town Boards or in their Village Boards. A lesser number were conscious of the County Government.

Two attempts had been made to bring about a new charter form of government for Nassau County. One attempt was by a committee of which William S. Pettit, Esq., of Woodmere, Long Island, was Chairman. This was a committee appointed following a resolution by the County Board of Supervisors adopted on January 9, 1922. The other attempt was by a committee of which Hon. Thomas J. Cuff of Garden City (now a Justice of the Supreme Court) was Chairman. This committee was sponsored in 1932 by the Village Officials Association of Nassau County. Both attempts failed of fruition.

Such was the background generally speaking within Nassau County in the early 1930s with an old form of government, a tremendous growth in population over a rural countryside and a genuine interest in communities within the county. Homes had been built by the hundreds. The Depression came and homes and lands were being sold for non-payment of taxes. People were tax-conscious, particularly as to local government and costs of government were rising with the demands for capital improvements and services. Estates and large land tracts were being offered for sale, not because real estate taxes were great but because the income taxes left individuals without the money necessary to hold or operate large places.

Further, it could be expected that Nassau County would continue to grow and that something should be done to make more business-like the matter of government, its administration, its service, its cost and a fair distribution to the taxpayers of that cost of government. The county governmental structure literally groaned under the demands made upon it.

A new vehicle of government was the only answer. It had to be a vehicle designed to carry a heavier load and do more with a lesser burden upon the taxpayers. Just as a new, streamlined automobile or truck is designed to give more service and more miles per gallon of gasoline so should the new county government give more services per each tax dollar. Debris in the form of antiquated county laws had to be removed from the highways this new vehicle of government was to travel. Thought had reasonably to be given to the future and the need for express highways. Just as an outmoded or old automobile called "a jallopy" could not give the "minimum speed of 25 miles per hour" demanded by the traffic signs on the Grand Central Parkway alongside of the World's Fair Grounds at Flushing, Long Island, so the old county form of government could not give what was asked of it.

These problems were discussed by your author who in 1934 was not only Presiding Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead but was also Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors. The discussions were had with all the Supervisors and also with others interested in the County Government as governmental officials, civic-minded individuals, bankers, real estate men, business men and home owners. Surveys and reports were had and every effort was made



to obtain all available information as to the needs of a change in government or, in other words, to obtain solutions for the pressing problems.

## II. A CHARTER IS PATTERNED

A Charter Commission was appointed on December 31, 1934, upon the initiative of the author, which was formally designated The Nassau County Commission on Governmental Revision but which subsequently came to be known as the Charter Commission. The members of this Commission were:

Earl J. Bennett	Rockville Centre
William S. Pettit	Woodmere
Charles S. Wright	Woodmere
Howard G. Wilson	Lynbrook
Joseph Hewlett	Woodmere
Lawrence E. Kirwin	Hempstead
James N. Gehrig	Hempstead
Henry J. A. Collins	Seaford
Edward S. Keogh	Freeport
Alfred D. Olena	Garden City
Ellery Mann	Garden City
H. Stewart McKnight	Great Neck
Henry A. Swartley	Manhasset
Edwin Vandewater	Port Washington
Oscar R. Houston	Great Neck
Elwood A. Curtis	Hicksville

E. Coe Kerr of Oyster Bay (whose appointment was not acted upon and in whose place Howard Kreutzer of Syosset was appointed March 11, 1935)

They were selected because of outstanding abilities and interest in civic service; they served without compensation, and liberally gave their time and their efforts to the new charter. They organized by electing Earl J. Bennett, Esq., of Rockville Centre, as Chairman, and immediately invited the author to address them and outline the field of their work.

Conferences were had with the commission and it was determined generally that there were two main objectives to be attained: the first, to provide a mechanism for obtaining county governmental services and county improvements at a reasonable cost; and, the second, to distribute fairly the burdens of such cost.

The attitude of the people of the county was studied along with these two objectives and a theory was brought into existence. This was the theory of the "two layers" of government generally speaking. In the lower layer there were to be retained or preserved to the several communities such as the special districts, villages, two cities and three towns, complete control and power over those functions of government which were closest to them, which they knew the most

about and which they genuinely desired to have continued under the authority of their respective inhabitants. This was for the preservation of "home rule" to the separate communities over those functions of government which were to be so continued excepting such functions as health, welfare and the lower courts.

The upper layer was to be the county government. This county governmental layer was to be brought up to date. It was to be made



*Parading the Prize-Winning Cattle, Mineola Fair Grounds*

businesslike in full sense, designed to meet the needs and demands of a continuously fast-growing population. It was to be designed to give the greatest number of governmental improvements and services possible for each tax dollar and to spread as reasonably and fairly as might be done the costs of this county government. It was in this upper layer of county government that the advancements and even reforms were to be made.

The "two layer" theory was admittedly a compromise, but was a compromise that makes for progress. Experience has indicated that the more comprehensive, ideal or perfect a proposed change of municipal government may be the less is the likelihood of its adoption at the polls. The greater the number of the proposed changes, the greater becomes the number of antagonists to those changes. Changes disturb habits of officials and employees and create fears and doubts among the uninformed people within the area to be affected by the



changes. Changes in municipal governments, because of their past results and histories, are sometimes looked upon with extreme cynicism. It was thought that while this theory might be a compromise, nevertheless, the obtaining of some advancements in government and governmental mechanisms would keep the evolution of county government moving forward; it would be "a moving forward" against "a standing still".

It was also pointed out during these conferences that advancements and even reforms in municipal government usually follow or accompany a revulsion by the voters and a Reform or Fusion Administration; here an effort was being made to obtain changes without having experienced such revulsion.

A principle was determined upon, that there should be no compromise in the set-up of the important and necessary business changes in the upper layer of county government contemplated by the theory. Thus, was the new Nassau County Charter patterned.

### III. PREPARING THE CHARTER

The Charter Commission at once invited all persons within the County to submit suggestions and to appear before the commission.

Not all of the members knew each other at the time of their appointment. However, opinions were freely expressed. Debates at times were heated. Votes upon items were at times close, but there were no cliques for the votes showed the members were doing their own thinking and voting as they thought best. Somehow, they accepted the result of the vote and then passed on to the next item of business without pique or resignation. The result has been wholesome, no doubt reflecting the commissioners' own approach to the problems.

When the hearings had been completed the Commission went to work upon the provisions and the draft of the charter. The two objectives had been determined upon, so had the "two layer" theory and also the principle that advancement and reform would be written into the upper layer.

The Commission then, after discussion, decided that there should be a County Executive and a County Budget. These decisions covered a series of meetings and heated debates.

As to the Office of County Executive, it was argued that such an officer would be the target of every complaint, rightfully and wrongfully, and that any dominant political organization sponsoring such a new office would become vulnerable at elections. It was also argued that the County Executive would be accused of situations, in various areas and governmental subdivisions to which the charter would fall heir and with which the county and county officials had had nothing to do nor any say. It was further argued that the County Executive would be complained against by citizens because of grievances real or imaginary and would also be complained against by officials or employees of the county government or other governments within the county area.

Against these arguments were offered the following:— The office of County Executive would provide every voter, county-wide, an opportunity to approve or disapprove of county policy by giving him the chance to vote for or against the nominee for this office; that without such an office the voters would never have an opportunity to approve or to disapprove county governmental policy; such an office would assist in developing a "county-consciousness"; such an office was stated to be the first step recommended by keen observers in the field of municipal government for county reform.

It may be noted in passing that the Hon. Alfred E. Smith as Governor of the State of New York in his legislative message of 1936 recommended such an office.

Then, a member of the Commission spoke for a County Manager to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The debates became heated. A vote was taken on the question: Shall there be a County Executive elected County-wide? The result was a tie of 7 to 7. The chairman thereupon cast a vote to break the tie. This decided the question in favor of the County Executive and the Commissioners addressed themselves to the next item of business, the proposed County Budget.

There was substantial unanimity among the members of the Commission that the county had no "budget" and that the "tax levy" and "expenses" were each erroneously referred to as a "budget".

It was pointed out that when departments, institutions and agencies requested appropriations to be made by the Board of Supervisors that these should be made according to a county plan or policy; that they should be reviewed by one having a power of veto and a power to disapprove or reduce or change a specific item proposed for expenditure by such department, institution or agency of the county. Much emphasis was placed upon the specific items.

In support of the argument for a veto or other action upon specific items, the dilemma in the Federal Government was used as illustration to this effect. It was stated that when the Federal Congress adopted a very important bill, a rider appropriating money for a specific purpose might be attached to such important bill; that when such important bill was submitted to the President for signature, he did not have the power to disapprove the rider; he could only approve or disapprove the very important bill with the rider attached and that if he had the power to approve the important bill and disapprove the rider, he might effect economies which he could not otherwise effect.

It was argued that there was no such veto for County expenses; it was argued that such a veto power, if vested in the County Executive, would assist him in protecting the taxpayer's pocketbook. Finally, it was stated in the commission that students of government and many individuals well versed in political science long have commented upon the lack of an executive head in County Government generally and upon a lack of a County Budget as such and under the County Executive control.



One Commissioner said that the County Executive if given such duties and powers would be blamed by employees and others for not getting enough for them and at the same time would be blamed by the taxpayers for not reducing taxes enough. This Commissioner has been proven a prophet.

An outline for the Charter was thus determined upon, including a mandatory re-assessment program to distribute fairly the costs of government. Then this was followed by writing the specific provisions for the outline agreed upon. The meetings of the Commission were held in the meeting and conference rooms of the Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Charles F. Strohson of Lynbrook, Clerk of the Board, supervised the arrangements and observed, in effect, that from the number of pencils and pads of paper being used the Commissioners must have been doing a lot of writing.

The Charter Commission was ready to submit to the State Legislature, at Albany in January of 1936, a copy of a proposed charter for Nassau County. The so-called Fearon Amendment to the State Constitution was adopted by the voters of the State in November 1935, effective as of January 1, 1936. This amendment to the State Constitution authorized certain transfers of functions of government to the county and also provided for the submission of these to the voters of a county where such transfers were proposed. The Governor in his Annual Message to the members of the Legislature of the State of New York on January 1, 1936, stressed the necessity for modernizing county governments. Nassau County was ready with a proposed charter and without loss of time submitted the proposed charter to the New York State Legislature of 1936. This action was not hasty because the commission diligently had been preparing the proposed charter during the prior year. The voters of Nassau County in November of 1936, the same year, approved the proposed charter.

During the Fall of 1936 the Commission had a Committee to educate the voters concerning the charter. This Committee supplied speakers. One speaker appeared at a meeting, only to find the sirens of fire engines blasting the air alongside the meeting place; at another time, no chair was available for the charter speaker upon the platform so he usurped the chair of the presiding officer of that meeting, whereupon another chair was placed upon the platform. At still another time the speaker, upon arriving at his destination, learned that twelve other speakers were scheduled to speak before him; this would have had him speaking after the listeners had gone to bed. However, the late Hon. Theodore Roosevelt (General, World War II) of Oyster Bay, was the first speaker of the evening and, learning of the "other" speakers, he introduced the Charter speaker after he, himself, had been introduced as the first speaker.

"True and False" teams were organized under the leadership of Mrs. Genesta Strong of Manhasset, now the first Assembly Woman elected to the New York State Assembly from Nassau County. These teams studied the Charter and then competed before public audiences which in turn were educated upon the Charter provisions.

## IV. GETTING READY FOR THE NEW CHARTER

The new charter was to become effective on January 1, 1938. The elective County Officials to take office on that date were to be elected during the prior November of 1937. These events took place.

The author in the meantime, as Chairman of the Nassau County Board of Supervisors, addressed that Board on August 20, 1937, concerning the preparatory work for the effective date of the Charter and on his motion a resolution was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on August 23, 1937, creating the Board of Supervisors—Charter Organization Bureau, of which Hon. Theodore Bedell, Jr., of Freeport, the County Comptroller, acted as Chairman. Mr. Bedell arranged for three key men in his office to participate in the work of this Bureau. They were: Mr. Fred Powell of Hempstead, Mr. Clifford Schenck of Great Neck and Mr. William Smith of Lynbrook.

It was then decided to retain a lawyer to give his entire time to the Bureau. Henry J. A. Collins, Esq., a resident of Seaford, and for more than thirteen years associated with Hon. Samuel Seabury in the practice of law, was appointed pursuant to a resolution sponsored by the author and adopted by the Board of Supervisors to be a Special Deputy County Attorney assigned to the Charter Organization Bureau. Judge Seabury granted him a leave of absence which was to become permanent. He had taken an active part in the work of the Charter Commission and his appointment was made at the author's request by the Hon. James L. Dowsey, of Manhasset, then County Attorney.

The Bureau was assisted by the author obtaining the services of Dr. M. P. Catherwood of Cornell University (now Commissioner of Commerce, Department of Commerce of the State of New York) and also of Frank Moore, Esq., of Buffalo, N. Y. (now Comptroller of the State of New York), two men well informed on Town and County Government and who rendered valuable service to the Charter Organization Bureau. The services of Dr. Thomas H. Reed of the Municipal Research were likewise obtained. Conferences were held by the author as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors with the Supervisors themselves and with the personnel of the Charter Organization Bureau, the Special Deputy County Attorney and the consultants.

Under date of October 8, 1937, following conferences, an analysis of the Charter was made by the author and a questionnaire presented concerning the proposed changes and, concerning the legal and practical problems arising from the proposed changes, under the new charter which was to become effective on January 1, 1938. These problems were so handled that the charter became effective on January 1, 1938, without any chaos and without inconvenience to taxpayers and residents and without payless paydays for employees. The county government began to work under the new charter.

The legal problems concerned possible conflicts between the provisions of the charter and general and special laws of the State. They also concerned interpretation of powers as these powers were



set forth in different provisions of the charter. Practical problems concerned not only the legal problems for consolidation of such functions as Health, Assessment and District Courts but also the taking over from the towns, cities and villages, as the case might be, of employees and equipment. It was realized that many of these legal problems had to be answered before January 1, 1938, and that the powers referred to had to be understood before that date. It was also realized that the transfer of employees must be considered from both the point of view of the county and of the employee concerned. As to the transfer of equipment, there had to be specific decisions regarding specific equipment.

The functions of government transferred to the county were to be henceforth paid for out of the county revenues. The county was to assume all expenses. For example, health officers and employees were to receive their salaries from the county and not from the village, city or town as the case might be; Justices of the Peace paid by the towns were to be replaced by Judges of the District Court paid by the county. The county financed the expenses and the costs of maintenance of functions transferred to it, but no revenues were transferred from any governmental unit within the county to the county government itself.

The problems received hours and hours of study and conferences and then action followed.

The original charter is to be found in Chapter 879 of the Laws of 1936, of the State of New York, and amendments, prior to its effective date, are to be found in Chapter 618 of the Laws of 1937, of the State of New York. Both laws were submitted, in the Fall of their respective years, to the voters of Nassau County and were approved by them at the polls.

Some of the transitions under the new charter required a knowledge beforehand of the attitude of some State Officials such as those of the New York State Civil Service Commission or of the State Health Commissioner. When a telephone call was made to a State Official at Albany one morning before 9:30 o'clock and the Charter Bureau could get no answer, Mr. Bedell, the Chairman, and Mr. Collins, Deputy County Attorney, ordered the County Airplane to be made ready and before 11 o'clock they walked into the Albany offices. This surprised the State Official. The air flight had taken less than fifty minutes. They got the answers and returned to Mineola for luncheon and then to resume the work of the Charter Organization Bureau.

A later trip was made by these two individuals to Albany, just prior to January 1, 1938, to obtain from the Civil Service Commission, transcripts of civil service employees' records. The weather was severely cold and the airplane was not heated, and upon arrival at Albany neither man could hardly walk. The taxicab trip from the Albany airport to the Capitol was employed by each in rubbing his legs to restore circulation. They returned to Mineola that same cold day with a similar experience, but also with their State approval and transcript.

The Charter Organization Bureau began its work September 27, 1937, and completed it prior to January 1, 1938. The details of this work could well be described in a three-volume edition of its own. Near its completion the individuals exhibited varying signs of fatigue, for they practically worked every day and night of each week. The forms of the fatigue, while humorous from this point of view, in no way interfered with the proper and timely completion of their task. New Year's Day fell upon a Friday; this one day gave a respite for sleep before a Sunday dress rehearsal preceding the functioning of the charter, the following day, Monday, January 1, 1938. Invitations to this rehearsal for the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors had been extended to citizens of the county such as Lewis Delafield, Esq., of Hewlett and Lester H. Washburn, Esq., of Great Neck, and others who attended and offered constructive comments.

As County Executive-elect the author was also occupied considering appointments of department heads, of the personnel of his office and of county governmental matters. The recommendations for appointments of the heads of the departments were determined upon prior to the effective day of the charter.

#### V. CHANGES MADE UNDER THE CHARTER

The new charter brought into being or intensified a "County Consciousness". It lifted the vision of residents beyond their communities, their villages, cities and towns to the County center at Mineola. Occasions arose later when it became necessary to remind our friends that the charter did not take over *all* governmental functions and services. There remained the "two layers" of government. However, the county layer had been changed.

The charter gave Nassau County a Budget, a new Assessment Department, a new Health Department, a new Welfare Department, District Courts, Medical Examiner, some other advancements and a County Executive.

Prior to January 1, 1938, a Nassau County Budget never existed. Prior to this date the department heads made known to the Board of Supervisors the amounts of money estimated for their respective departments and these with the other expenses were added up and were loosely *called* "the County Budget". On the other side, the revenue side, were added up the items of revenue which the county received from the State, from other sources and as departmental income. The difference between the expenditure side and the revenue side constituted the sum of the tax levy. This tax levy was likewise erroneously *called* "the County Budget". "Expenses" and "tax levy" are only parts of a true budget.

The budget under the new Nassau County Charter provides the making of estimates for the several departments, institutions and agencies of the county and a review of these by the County Executive. Then there follows the preparation of a budget of broad scope which covers such items as revenues, tax levy, receipts, sinking fund, estimated cash balance, county business and expenses, debt service, judgments and other matters and there are set out the requirements



for quarterly allotments for work programs for the respective departments, institutions and agencies, and the mechanism for handling all items of finance. The control of expenses during a fiscal year was placed as a responsibility upon the County Executive who has the power to reconsider the allotments of monies and the work programs so as to forestall the making of expenditures in excess of income and fund balances. By exercise of this power the county does not spend more than its revenues except in abnormal instances. The power is designed to aid the County Executive in balancing the budget in acting as a safety brake for the benefit of all taxpayers and residents. Not only has the County Executive responsibilities concerning the management of the budget, but he has specific powers and duties concerning its preparation.

Prior to October 1st in each year he receives from the department head a proposed budget for that department. The County Executive has the duty to review the requests of the department head to determine whether they are in line with the general policy of the administration and to strike out any such requests which to him may appear excessive or not warranted at the time. The County Executive prepares and submits to the Board of Supervisors his proposed budget which shows in one column the amounts requested by the heads of the departments, institutions and agencies and in another column the amounts recommended by the County Executive. The Board of Supervisors is given certain powers for replacing what the County Executive strikes out or for affirming his action. In addition to these columns there are also required by the Charter parallel columns showing the actual expenses of the department for the nine months prior to the preparation of the current budget, the actual appropriation for the year prior to the ensuing budget and the actual disbursements for the entire calendar year prior to that. These parallel columns offer comparative statistics for those who desire to study the budget and afford an opportunity more intelligently to understand the affairs of County Government.

The office of County Executive was newly created. Generally, he appoints the department heads with the approval of the Board of Supervisors. He may remove a department head without such approval. These new features were intended to promote administrative efficiency and to make effective "county policy". He is responsible to the voters county-wide for the administration of the County Government.

The office of County Comptroller which existed within the county prior to the charter remained an elective office and his duties and powers were expanded. For example, the County Comptroller was given the power to examine and audit on his own motion or when directed so to do by resolution of the Board of Supervisors, the accounts and records of any town or special district.

The Board of Supervisors of Nassau County is small in number of its personnel and the charter will keep the number small. No city incorporated after the effective date of the charter shall elect a supervisor thereof but such city shall continue, for the purpose

of electing supervisors, to be a part of the towns or town from which such city was erected. The powers held by the former Board of Supervisors devolved upon the new Board under the new form of County Charter. The new Board also was generally evolved into a legislative body conducting its business according to a more modern procedure. The County Executive is the presiding officer, not Chairman of the Board. The County Executive under the new charter may speak on any matter before the Board but may vote only to break a tie.

Provision was also made for a calendar practice for the Board of Supervisors and for the designation of two official newspapers to represent the two major political parties. Additional powers were given to the Board of Supervisors concerning the enactment of local laws and ordinances. The gist of the calendar practice was to provide those persons who might be interested with an opportunity of learning what was proposed for action by the Board of Supervisors. The advocates of this procedure described it as being "designed to stop fast ones". In other words, the Board would no longer conceive and adopt resolutions on the Monday upon which it met; the Board would henceforth adopt only those matters which had been heralded to the county for at least ten days prior to their adoption except in the case of an emergent matter. The author repeats this procedure did not exist prior to January 1, 1938, and it creates a right, for civic-minded residents, characteristic of the advancement in the so-called "upper layer" of County Government.

Provision was made for two official newspapers. Briefly, these two official newspapers are to represent the two political parties whose candidate for Governor received the highest number of votes in the County at the last general election in which a Governor was chosen. So far, these two parties have been Republican and Democratic; the Republican members of the Board designating one official newspaper.

The responsibility for executing many of the changes in the procedure of the Board of Supervisors and in their records fell upon the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Charles F. Strohson, a resident of Lynbrook. Mr. Strohson and the members of his staff handled the changes proposed for the Board of Supervisors and Mr. Strohson cooperated with the County Executive and the personnel of his office in giving real effect to the intent of the new charter.

The office of the County Executive was new under the charter and the personnel appointed to assist the County Executive was likewise new in the official life of the County Government. Two Deputies were to be appointed. One Deputy was selected for his experience and record in law and government. He was Henry J. A. Collins, a resident for many years of Seaford, and had been associated for more than thirteen years in the practice of law with the Hon. Samuel Seabury in New York City. He was the Special Deputy County Attorney assigned to the Charter Organization Bureau as well as a member of the Charter Commission and is now the County



Judge. The other Deputy, Hon. Raymond W. Houston, a resident of East Williston, was selected for his experience and record in welfare work and broad social problems. He had been active as an executive in social work for approximately ten years. He is now Deputy Commissioner of Public Welfare of the State of New York. Mrs. Dallas Wilhelm, a resident of Floral Park, was appointed Secretary to the County Executive. Mrs. Wilhelm had a long and intensive experience as a law stenographer and was the Executive Stenographer over all of the stenographers, and their assignments of work, employed by the Charter Organization Bureau in arranging for the transfers of governmental functions, of governmental employees and other changes under the new charter.

The immediate problem of this new office was to complete the organization of the several County Departments, agencies, institutions and Boards for which preparation had been made by the Charter Organization Bureau. This work was unique. There were no specific precedents as Nassau County initiated the very first County Charter within the State of New York. Nassau County was the pioneer.

Mention has been made of Hon. Theodore Bedell, Jr., County Comptroller. It should be recorded that Mr. Bedell participated in the conferences prior to the creation of the Charter Commission; that he actively assisted in the work of the commission; that he headed the work preparatory for the new charter; that he continued his participation in the organization of the departments and in cooperating with the Office of the County Executive on and after the effective date of the charter.

Soon after the adoption of the charter the County Executive held conferences with the County Attorney and the members of the Board of Supervisors and the County Comptroller and recommended that action be taken for a recodification of all of the laws applicable to Nassau County. This was done and manuals of the Administrative Law and codes were made available. Hon. Marcus Christ of New Hyde Park, then Deputy County Attorney and now County Attorney, actively participated in this work and the services of an outstanding lawyer, Howard G. Wilson, Esq. of Lynbrook, and the members of his staff were obtained under contract. The work was consummated on June 17, 1939.

The members of the Board of Supervisors who shared the responsibility for the recodification were Hon. J. Russel Sprague, County Executive, of Lawrence, N. Y.; A. Holly Patterson, Supervisor, Town of Hempstead; Harold P. Herman, Supervisor, Town of Hempstead; Hartford N. Gunn, Supervisor, Town of North Hempstead; Harry Tappen, Supervisor, Town of Oyster Bay; Horace K. T. Sherwood, Supervisor, City of Glen Cove; Jacob W. Osmann, Supervisor, City of Long Beach; Charles F. Strohson, Clerk of Board, of Lynbrook, N. Y.—as of January 1, 1938.

Taxes are of great concern to every home owner and taxpayer. The charter provided for a consolidation of the Boards of Assessors of each of the three towns into a County Board of Assessors with

a chairman of the Board elected county-wide. Villages and cities were given the opportunity to use the county assessments or to determine their own. A county program of reassessment was made mandatory by the charter designed to iron out inequalities. Emil Podeyn then residing at Freeport and experienced in real estate matters had been elected for a six year term as Chairman of the Board of Assessors. The members of the Board on January 1, 1938, were: E. M. Podeyn, Chairman of the Board, Freeport; Mrs. Morgan S. Smith, Lawrence; Mr. Henry J. Hausch, New Hyde Park; Mr. Robert E. Patterson, Freeport; Mr. James F. McCarthy, Massapequa.

Prior to the new charter there were 63 villages, 2 cities and 3 towns; each had or could have had its own health officer. These terminated when the County Board of Health was appointed and in turn appointed the County Health Commissioner. This is an example of the maintenance of the principle determined upon to give effect to the charter pattern. This proposed department was attacked by some opponents of the proposed charter. Today, it would be almost unanimously acclaimed. In selecting the first Health Commissioner, the advice and suggestions of Dr. Edward S. Godfrey, Health Commissioner of the State of New York, and of Dr. Thomas Parran, Jr., Surgeon General of the United States, the Nassau County Medical Society and others were earnestly sought. Dr. Earle G. Brown, formerly Health Commissioner of the State of Kansas, was selected and appointed on February 16, 1938. The members of the Nassau County Board of Health were: Dr. Earle G. Brown, Health Commissioner of Hempstead; Dr. Benjamin R. Allison, Chairman of the Board, of Hewlett; Dr. Richard Derby of Oyster Bay; Mrs. Genesta Strong of Plandome; Mr. Charles Nelson of Bellerose, and Rev. Arthur B. Kinsolving, 2nd, of Garden City.

Public Welfare was made a complete county function. All offices of Commissioner of Public Welfare of Cities and Towns, the Emergency Relief Bureau, and all other Boards had their powers and duties transferred to the County Board of Public Welfare. The Board of Child Welfare was continued as a separate entity until March 31, 1946.

Originally the members of the Charter Commission had agreed to consolidate the Board of Child Welfare with the Department of Public Welfare. This was written into the earlier draft of the charter. Near the completion of the charter work two members of the Commission, also members of the Board of Child Welfare requested that it be continued intact for the best immediate needs of the county. The matter was debated. By a vote of seven to six it was decided to continue the Board of Child Welfare.

The members of the Board of Child Welfare were: William S. Pettit, Chairman, of Lawrence; the Very Reverend Charles J. Canivan of Oyster Bay; Mrs. W. Allston Flagg of Westbury; Edwin W. Hicks of Westbury; Robert K. Atkinson of Rockville Centre, and Mrs. Kenneth D. Robertson of Hewlett.

The members of the Board of Managers for the Meadowbrook Hospital at this time were: George L. Hubbell, President, of Garden



City; Fred H. Maidment of Sea Cliff; Dr. Benjamin W. Seaman of Hempstead; Col. Arthur S. Dwight, Great Neck; Col. Joseph J. Kerrigan, Oyster Bay, and Dr. A. J. McRae, Superintendent, of Garden City.

The members of the Board of Managers for the Farmingdale or Nassau County Sanatorium at this time were: George L. Hubbell, President, of Garden City; Dr. Joseph B. Conolly of Glen Cove; Mrs. Howard Kniffin of Lawrence; Dr. Albert M. Bell of Sea Cliff; and Dr. James C. Walsh, Superintendent, of Farmingdale.

Another function transferred to the county was that of the inferior courts. Prior to the charter there were Justices of the Peace Courts in each of the three towns. Villages had or could have had Village Police Courts. The Justices of the Peace were abolished and their powers, duties and jurisdiction were transferred to the District Court of the county and the judges thereof. The Police Justices of the villages were not abolished. However, their powers, duties and jurisdiction were transferred to the county with the exception of jurisdiction over violations of village ordinances and village regulations and the violations of the Vehicle and Traffic Law committed within the limits of the village with the exception of the cases in which the charge may be Operating a Motor Vehicle or Motorcycle while in an intoxicated condition.

The member of the Commission who had been advocating the abolition of the offices of Justice of the Peace and Coroner had prepared a draft which also included the abolition of Village Police Justices. Another member then spoke up and said he hoped this charter would go before the voters and that Police Justices in many villages had friends and if their jobs were abolished they would all vote against the charter. Finally, it was agreed to take away all jurisdiction and powers except as noted in the above paragraph. No Village Police Justice raised an objection to the curtailment of jurisdiction until after the charter became effective on January 1, 1938.

Judges of the District Court were to be lawyers and not to have other business. Leslie J. Ekenberg, Esq. of Lawrence was elected county-wide as President of the Board of Judges of the District Court. George S. Johnson, Esq. of Bellmore, Norman Lent, Esq. of Lynbrook, (Major, World War II), and Samuel Greason, Esq. of Garden City (Colonel, World War II) were elected Judges from the Town of Hempstead. Albert Moore, Esq. of Williston Park and Cyril Brown, Esq. of Great Neck were elected Judges from the Town of North Hempstead. Joseph Lebkeucher, Esq. of Hicksville was elected Judge from the Town of Oyster Bay. Together, they comprised the Board of Judges.

The transfers of the powers, duties and jurisdiction of the Justices of the Peace and of the Village Police Justices as above described were not perfunctory transfers. Advancements or reforms accompanied the transfer. New qualifications were demanded and new prohibitions were imposed upon those who might become judges of the County District Court. No judge of the District Court may engage in the practice of law nor hold any other public office in the

county. His salary was determined by the charter which also set forth “. . . that a complete rotation in the assignment of the judges shall be made at least annually . . .” The theory behind this last provision was that the judges should be afforded an opportunity to move about the entire county, to be given broader horizons and contacts and have an opportunity to observe the people throughout the entire county.

The office of Coroner was abolished and the office of County Medical Examiner was created by the new County Charter. Dr. Theodore Curphey of Garden City was appointed to the new office.

A Civil Service Commission was likewise created for the County. It was given an herculean task. Qualifications for service were tediously set forth. The duties under the charter to begin with the new consolidations and transfers and to continue thereafter were set forth. This commission was composed of Richard H. Brown, Esq., of Valley Stream, Chairman; Charles S. Wright of Woodmere, and George D. Smith of Manhasset. They appointed William O. Frech of Williston Park as Executive Secretary.

A County Fire Prevention Commission proposed by Volunteer Firemen of Nassau County was created. The County, generally speaking, is divided into nine Fire Battalion Districts to which delegates are elected to the departments and companies within those respective districts. The delegates of each Fire Battalion District elect a Chairman and it is this Chairman who becomes one of the nine members of the County Fire Prevention Commission. This Commission studies the firemanic needs of the County and makes recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors. The Commission actively investigates the causes of fires and in cooperation with the Police Department investigates all cases of suspected arson.

The Fire Prevention Commission members were: Wilbur R. Seaman, Chairman, of Hempstead; Frank J. Gilliar, Vice Chairman, of Great Neck; Harry R. Gleckler of Hicksville; LeRoy Kinsey of Mineola; Mario A. Pollini of Malverne; Joseph J. Scully of Point Lookout; William Henshall of Valley Stream; James McInnes, Jr. of Syosset, and Henry Schaardt of Bellmore. These fire prevention provisions were presented by the volunteer firemen themselves. In addition to most of the above Commissioners, others who participated in this work were: W. Harry Lister of Rockville Centre; Charles Nimmich of Garden City; George Trigg of East Rockaway, and George Clough of Hempstead. George Clough was later appointed County Fire Marshal and Peter Lynch of Glenwood Landing was appointed Assistant County Fire Marshal.

There were other changes brought about by the charter, for example, all fees and sums received or collected by any employee of the county must be paid without any deduction to the County Treasurer and a report must be made to the County Comptroller on such forms as he shall require. This provision finally did away with all fees.

Still other changes were made effective. The County Treasurer was not to be elected but was to be appointed. Harry L. Hedger of the City of Glen Cove was appointed to this office.



The County Department of Purchase was given additional responsibilities. E. Stanley Bosanko of Floral Park was appointed Purchasing Agent.

Other appointments and administrative positions were John C. Guibert of Oceanside, Commissioner of Public Works; Abram W. Skidmore of Hewlett, Commissioner of Police; Robert Williams of Roosevelt, Sealer of Weights and Measures.

At this time Hon. Leone D. Howell, of Mineola, was Surrogate; Hon. Cortland A. Johnson of Lawrence, County Judge; Edward J. Neary, Esq. of Westbury, District Attorney; Charles E. Ransom, of Sea Cliff, County Clerk; Gustave Mederer of Valley Stream, Sheriff; Edward S. Betts of East Rockaway, Confidential Investigator, and Joseph H. McCloskey of Freeport, Superintendent of Buildings.

#### VI. RESULTS OF CHANGES UNDER CHARTER

Since January 1, 1938, to the date of this writing, ten years have elapsed. We may now review this period of ten years and report upon those achievements which became possible by means of the new Nassau County Charter.

So far as County Government was concerned the new charter was to set up a modern business mechanism to get county governmental services and improvements at reasonable cost, and also fairly to distribute that cost.

The bonded debt and bond anticipation notes of the county were decreased from a peak of \$57,584,000 to \$34,316,000. This is a reduction of \$23,268,000, or 40.4 percent.

Tax anticipation loans have been eliminated. One not versed in the finances of the county may rightly inquire: What are they? Simply this: The county has to pay in cash to the towns, schools and special districts each year the sum total of their uncollected taxes. In many years this has been 25 percent more than the county took in by means of tax payments, so that Nassau County had to issue tax anticipation notes to make up the deficits. The county government borrowed the money until it could collect the unpaid taxes. Borrowing of this character totalled in 1935 as much as \$10,450,000. These notes have all been paid off and the current budgets are on a strictly cash basis. These figures should be sufficient, in a chapter of this character, to convey the picture of the healthy financial condition of the county.

The Charter made mandatory a county-wide reassessment of real property. The Charter Commission found as facts that a \$10,000 house was not assessed for the same amount in each school district of a given town, nor in each town or municipality; and that inequality of assessments resulted in unequal tax burdens. An illustration of this problem was given in the County Executive's message to the Board of Supervisors in February of 1938, as follows:

Now, what is our tax problem? Our tax problem is to distribute fairly and justly the cost of government. Does a high assessment mean that taxes will be higher? No. Does

a high rate of tax mean that taxes will be higher? No. The amount of tax is determined by the cost of government, not by assessed valuation of property. Let me emphasize and illustrate my point. Suppose, for example, that there is a taxpayer, by the name of Mr. X, and that Mr. X's home and lots should justly share in the cost of government to the amount of One Hundred Dollars. How might Mr. X's \$100 share be levied? If Mr. X's home and lots were assessed at \$2,000, then the rate of tax would be five (.05) percent because five percent of \$2,000 would be \$100, or Mr. X's share in the cost of government. If Mr. X's home and lots were assessed at \$5,000, then the rate would have to be two (.02) percent because it would take two percent of \$5,000 to raise \$100, or Mr. X's share in the cost of government. If Mr. X's home and lots were assessed at \$10,000 then the rate would be one (.01) percent because it would only take one percent of \$10,000 to raise \$100, or Mr. X's share in the cost of government. Mr. X's share in the cost of government remains the same when the assessed value is low and the tax rate high, as when the assessed value is high and the tax rate is low. The essential thing is that if Mr. X's home and lots are assessed at either \$2,000 or \$5,000 or \$10,000 then every other home and lot of equal value should be assessed at the same amount. Before leaving this example, let me say, that if the true value of assessment for Mr. X's home is \$5,000, then I am for placing that true value upon the tax books, because of the many benefits to be derived. True assessments of themselves do not mean high taxes. This is my point.

Inquiry was made of the American Society of Civil Engineers by the Chairman of the Board of Assessors concerning the appraisal companies and the best advice and methods of reassessment. A contract was finally made with an Ohio firm. Simultaneously, there was a court action to set aside the contract. The county government was victorious in this litigation, the legal citations of which are: *Queens Park Gardens, Inc. vs. County of Nassau, et al.*, N. Y. Law Journal, July 9, 1938, at page 81; 255 App. Div., 625; Court of Appeals, 280 N. Y., 789.

Two years after the message was given to the Board of Supervisors concerning the tax inequalities, to wit in February 1940, representatives of the County Board of Assessors attended a school conducted by the Municipal Training Institute of New York State under the auspices of the New York State Regents at Albany. The following is taken from the Chairman's report:

	Nassau County	Toledo
Population (Estimated) . . . . .	415,000	300,000
No. of Parcels (Approx.) . . . . .	400,000	160,000
Assessment roll . . . . .	\$1,135,000,000	\$500,000 000
Cost of reassessment . . . . .	\$190,000	\$470,000



Comparisons between municipalities are not always fair because in many cases there are elements, conditions or other factors which account for the differences in costs. The above comparison is only made for the purpose of demonstrating that the Nassau County reassessment was done at a reasonable cost to the taxpayers. The broadest publicity was sought by the Board of Assessors in their reassessment program. Numerous letters were addressed to civic and taxpayers' associations, and many hearings were held throughout the villages and communities of the county. The following extract is from the opinion of the Supreme Court Justice:

It can be seen from the foregoing that no duty of a light or perfunctory nature was laid on the incoming board. On the contrary, they were required in effect to tear up the existing method of appraisal in Nassau County by the roots and replace it by the new and improved system prescribed in the Charter. New tax maps and land value maps were to be prepared and maintained and this was to be done as promptly as possible and in no event later than three years from the effective date of this act.

Again, in conclusion, the learned Supreme Court Justice said this:

I am convinced, however, beyond any doubt that the expenditure of these moneys in the manner contracted for is legal under the Charter and within the scope of the defendant officials. Not only does it not constitute waste in the legal sense, but it is far from waste in any ordinary or every day sense, and will, to my mind, result in immeasurable benefit to the taxpayers of the County.

The Courts determined that Nassau County could proceed with its reassessment work.

Nassau County modernized the collection of delinquent real estate taxes. Under article 7-B of the General Tax Law of the State, actions were brought in which there were combined hundreds and hundreds of parcels and as many as a thousand defendants. When titles were cleared or made marketable, the county held auction sales. Thus, real estate which had been formerly "dead", in that it did not pay its share of the cost of government, was given a new life and restored to the tax rolls to pay its fair share of governmental services. I repeat, Nassau County has pioneered in this method of restoring delinquent tax property to the tax rolls.

During the early Charter days, the county acquired seventy-three acres located within Old Country Road on the north, Washington Avenue on the east, Eleventh Street on the south and the railroad on the west, at Garden City. This site establishes the new county center. Upon the northern section of this site have been erected three buildings at a cost of \$2,816,188.72, and now, at this writing, occupied by the Supreme Court, the County Court, the Surrogate's Court, the

Children's Court, the District Court (for jury trials) and various offices such as those of the District Attorney, the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, Department of Assessment and the Department of Health.

Many stories might be related concerning the institution of budget control and the modernization of administering county finances. However, the greater satisfaction should come from the results achieved in reducing the debt, in giving additional governmental services without increased costs, and in offering our taxpayers a good government.

As a whole, the new Charter and its provisions for up-to-date business administration and up-to-date budgetary control are an improvement upon the previous form of government patterned after that of the time of Oliver Cromwell. Discussions and additional refinements, or adverse opinions as to separate provisions of the law, or other elements or details of the Charter ought not to outweigh or confuse one's mind as to the benefits which have come and may be continued under the charter form in its present entirety. Modern forms of government are useful. However, the better use comes from those individuals who are interested in good government of itself, and are able and willing to give their efforts to that end.





## CHAPTER XXXII

### *History of Long Island State Parks*

CHESTER R. BLAKELOCK

*Executive Secretary, Long Island State Park Commission*

THE first State Park Commission on Long Island met and organized on June 2, 1902, pursuant to Chapter 260 of the Laws of 1902 and although this fact may be of historical interest it is of little importance because from that time until 1924 there is little evidence of any state park activity on Long Island. No worth-while state park plan, program or progress was made until the present Long Island State Park Commission was organized on April 10, 1924, under the leadership of Robert Moses.

The first Long Island State Park Commissioners held a number of meetings and hearings and in 1903 made a report to the Legislature recommending that at least three park areas be acquired by the State—one at Wading River of about 5000 acres on Long Island Sound, one on the Connetquot River in the Town of Islip with a small frontage on Lake Ronkonkoma and one in Southampton Township of about 7000 acres on Peconic Bay.

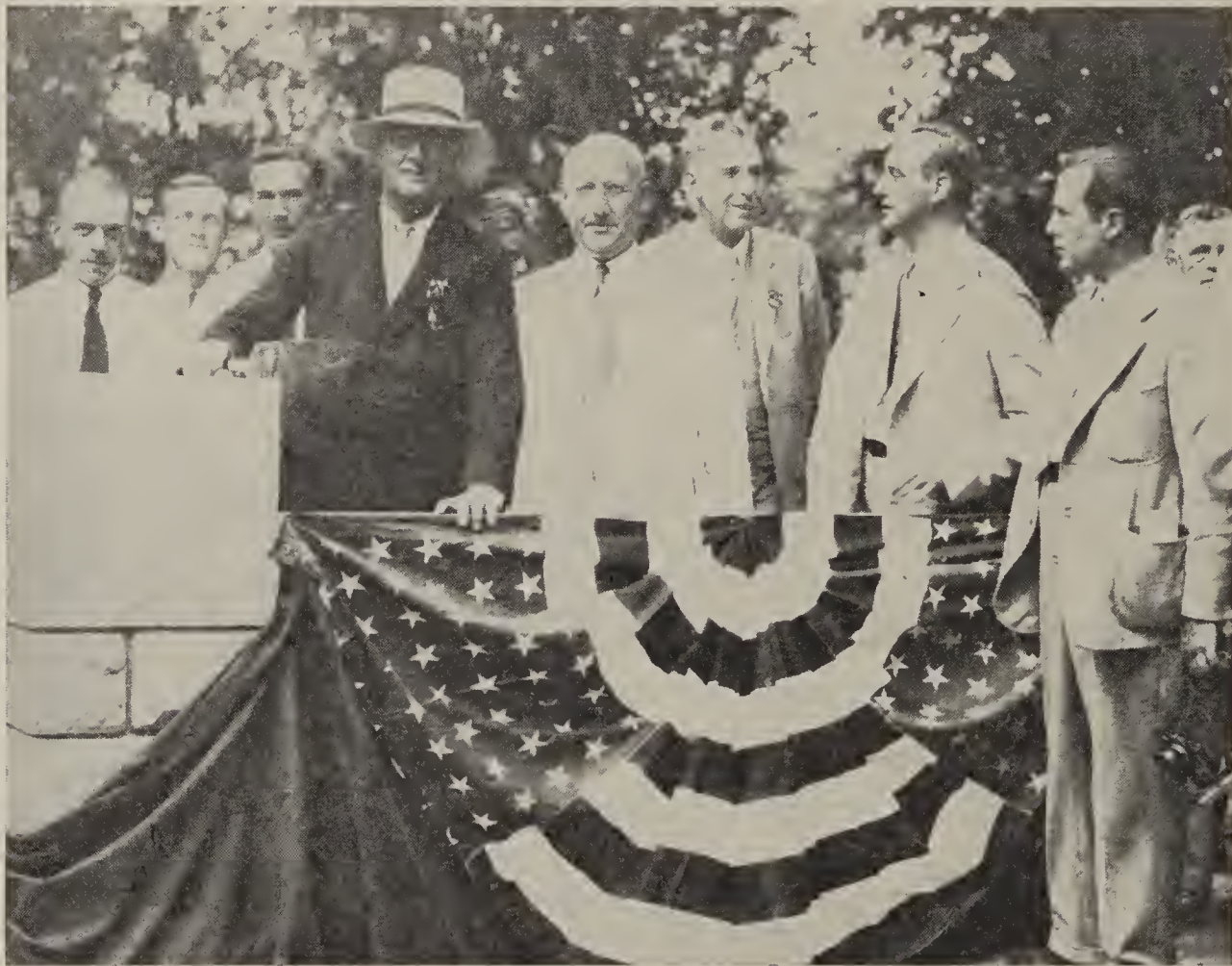
The Law creating the Park Commission authorized it to acquire 5000 acres of land for state park purposes. After making its suggestions which contained no request for funds to accomplish its purpose, it died of inertia in 1904 without having acquired a single acre of land by purchase, gift or otherwise.

Shortly after the First World War, there was a tremendous new interest shown in outdoor recreation of all kinds. At that time throughout the State of New York there were, in addition to the large forest preserve which is highly restricted by law for most recreational uses, only a few large state parks and a number of scattered small historic sites and places of scenic interest which made up the state park system. Actually it was not a system at all. Practically every park was administered by a separate board or commission with no unified plan and without any means of coordination. Because of this Mr. Moses drew up a plan of unification of state park facilities by dividing the state into ten park regions, each to be administered by a regional state park commission within the State Conservation Department. The head of each regional commission was to be a member of a central coordinating body known as the State Council of Parks. Governor Alfred E. Smith enthusiastically endorsed and supported Mr. Moses' recommendations which were enacted into law and the whole theory of a broader park program was approved by the people of the state by an overwhelming vote on a state bond issue for park and parkway improvements.

The State Park Council plan provided for a regional state park commission on Long Island with jurisdiction over all parks and park-



ways acquired by the State in the Counties of Nassau and Suffolk. The present Commission which organized in 1924 pursuant to this plan with Mr. Moses as President and Townsend Scudder and Clifford L. Jackson, Commissioners, inherited absolutely nothing from its predecessor of twenty years before. The only state park lands on Long Island that came under the jurisdiction of the present Commis-



*Laying Cornerstone at Nassau County line, marking start of construction of Northern State Parkway in 1931*

(Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt; Arthur E. Howland, chief engineer of Long Island State Park Commission; Charles P. Powell, Borough of Queens engineer; Robert Moses, president of Long Island State Park Commission.)

sion consisted of less than 200 acres on Fire Island which had originally been acquired by the State in 1893 as a quarantine station.

There are now fifteen state parks in the Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, twelve of which have been developed with a variety of facilities for healthful outdoor recreation. There are also ninety-three miles of completed parkways under the jurisdiction of the Commission and rights of way have been acquired for the construction of an additional thirty-nine miles, making a total of one hundred and thirty-two miles of landscaped parkways without crossings at grade, reaching from the New York City line to Sunken Meadow State Park near Smithtown and Heckscher State Park at East Islip, with connecting parkways at Wantagh in Nassau County and Brightwaters in Suf-



folk County. Funds are available for the major portion of the uncompleted program and all of it is designed or being designed for future construction. Of the total of 21,838 acres of land now comprising the State Park and Parkway system on Long Island, 15,036 acres were acquired by donations and the balance by purchase and by entry and appropriation.

This record was not made without difficulties which at the time to many seemed insurmountable. Commissioner Moses' first attempt to secure land from the Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay for Jones Beach State Park was voted down in 1925. His plan for the Northern State Parkway was fought by the large estate owners on the North Shore and in the Wheatley Hills section. From 1924 until 1929 a large New York City newspaper published scores of editorials, sometimes as many as four a week, denouncing Mr. Moses and the Commission. The opposition organized committees for protest and campaigns against the Commission's plans, they belabored Governor Smith to remove Commissioner Moses and they had bills introduced in the Legislature to abolish the Commission. Through all these trials and troubles Governor Smith stood by the Commission and saw the plan carried out as originally proposed by Mr. Moses. The form of this opposition is related in more detail in the history of some of the parks which follows:

#### FIRE ISLAND STATE PARK

Despite the fact that Fire Island State Park is older by nearly twenty years than any other state park on Long Island, its historical background is probably the least known. The lack of general knowledge about Fire Island State Park is due to its comparative inaccessibility and not because its history has been quiet or uneventful.

Many times since October 9, 1693, when this area was granted to William Smith by Governor Fletcher as representative of the English Crown, it has prominently figured in the news. The numerous shipwrecks on its shores during these early days kept it almost constantly before the public. It was the frequency of these wrecks that led to the acquisition of the westerly tip of Fire Island as a lighthouse site by the United States Government in 1825 and the construction thereon of a lighthouse which was rebuilt shortly thereafter into the present familiar landmark which has withstood all storms and is still in operation.

The lighthouse apparently cut down the number of serious wrecks at this location until the summer of 1850 when the tragic wreck of the bark *Elizabeth* occurred during a severe storm. This shipwreck has been extensively publicized because among its victims was Margaret Fuller, famous literary editor of the *New York Tribune* and prominent advocate of women's rights.

Another landmark in the park until recent years was the Western Union telegraph station with a nine-story-high watchtower from which incoming ships were sighted and the news telegraphed into New York City. In this way New York would know some eighteen hours before





*Northern State Parkway Showing the Provisions Taken for the Protection of Pedestrians Who Here  
Have Ten Miles of Good Hiking in Pleasant Surroundings*





*A Bit of Northern State Parkway, Near Westbury, Home of International Polo*



the arrival of a vessel what ship was due and when. This service, which became outmoded by radio, was abandoned around December, 1920.

In 1855 David S. S. Sammis obtained title to about 120 acres immediately east of the lighthouse property. Here he constructed the famous Surf Hotel, a large three-story frame building with covered walks connecting nearby guest cottages. A few years later Sammis constructed a dock at the foot of Fire Island Avenue in Babylon from which he operated the sidewheeler steamship *Ripple* in regular ferry service to his hotel. Later the dock was served by horse-drawn street



*A Drawing of the Northern State Parkway, Wantagh Extension*

cars from the Babylon railroad station. The hotel prospered even through the Civil War years and was visited by many prominent persons during the 60s and 70s and most of the 80s. One large annex adjacent to the main hotel was called "Albany Cottage" and became famous because of its patronage by noted political leaders and legislators. Early accounts show that surf bathing and ocean air were considered important benefits to health and although the hotel was not strictly a health resort the financial success of the enterprise was apparently due to the emphasis placed on its fine surf bathing and "the ozonic tonic of the ocean" for those "in need of an ocean voyage but unable to follow the dictates of their physician".

The Surf Hotel withstood the storms and gales of Fire Island for more than three decades when in 1892 the Port of New York became jittery over a cholera scare. Strict watch was kept on all immigrants and passengers from foreign countries. On August 30, 1892, the *S. S. Moravia* from Hamburg arrived in New York Harbor laden with passengers and because of the scare was forced to remain



in quarantine. Several other ships were likewise held up and due to congestion in the harbor the health authorities sought to obtain an isolated spot to hold passengers of these boats who, although not infected with cholera, might have been exposed to it.

In order to meet this need the Boards of Health of both the city and state demanded the immediate purchase of the Surf Hotel on Fire Island as the most logical location for a quarantine station. The state legislature was not in session and there was no money available. James P. Wendell, who was Deputy Comptroller of the State at that time, suggested that if some philanthropic person advanced the purchase price the next legislature might reimburse him. No such person was found so Governor Roswell P. Flower ordered the purchase of the property and gave his personal check in the sum of \$50,000 as a part payment on the purchase price of \$210,000 for the hotel including about 120 acres of land, dock and incidental buildings at Fire Island and the dock at the foot of Fire Island Avenue at the terminus of the Babylon trolley line.

When the people of the Towns of Babylon and Islip heard of the purchase they became alarmed. Mass meetings were held and a few days later three fishing sloops were manned by more than a hundred indignant citizens armed with shotguns. They set sail for Fire Island bent on burning down the hotel. Arriving at the beach, cooler heads suggested that they first make sure that the big frame building was not occupied. Unfortunately for the would-be fire fiends, it was. A caretaker and his family were living there and refused to be roused.

The following day the still irate citizens obtained an injunction from Supreme Court Justice Barnard against the use of the beach for cholera quarantine purposes and armed with the writ they took possession of the hotel dock to prevent any landings. The *S. S. Cephyus* came through the inlet and attempted to dock. Hawsers were continually cast off and whenever a line was made fast, they proceeded to chop it free from the dock. The captain of the *Cephyus* resorted to a steam hose from the ship's boiler. The mob retreated but the *Cephyus* did not dock.

News of these activities was flashed to New York by the Fire Island telegraph station and there soon arrived in Babylon several companies of the New York National Guard. Hearing that troops were being ferried across the bay, the mob which had held the Surf Hotel dispersed. Within a few hours the *Cephyus* passengers were landed and put up in the hotel. None of them had cholera. The troops left Fire Island on October 5th but for the duration of the quarantine two deputy sheriffs were stationed at the Babylon dock to prevent the landing of anyone from the station.

The official purchase of the hotel properties was made by the State of New York on March 9, 1893, after the enacting of Chapter 3 of the Laws of 1893 which provided for the reimbursement of \$50,000 to Governor Flower and the payment of the balance of \$160,000 to Mr. Sammis.

By the summer of 1893 the cholera scare had completely subsided and the following spring the state legislature by Chapter 357 of the Laws of 1894 authorized the Department of Health to lease the Fire



Island holdings for hotel purposes. The old Surf Hotel was thereafter operated under lease from the state for several years until major repairs and the falling off of business made it unprofitable.

On May 22, 1908, Governor Charles Evans Hughes signed a bill which had passed the state legislature authorizing the use of the Fire Island reservation as a state park and pursuant to this act he appointed Edward C. Blum, Samuel L. Parrish, Henry W. Sackett, John C. Robbins and John H. Vail as Commissioners of the Fire Island State Park Commission.



*Southwest corner of Main Street and Fire Island Avenue in 1892*

Showing the arrival of National Guard and Federal troops in Babylon to quell the uprising against the Fire Island quarantine station. Trolley tracks can be seen in the unpaved street in the foreground.

Thus it was that the ill wind of a plague-threatened city brought about the establishment of the first state park on Long Island and the only ocean-front park in the entire state until the opening of Hither Hills and Jones Beach State Parks about twenty years later.

The first action taken by the Fire Island State Park Commission was to conduct an auction sale of miscellaneous buildings on the property, most of which were in a dilapidated condition. During severe storms of 1907 the hotel dining hall had been swept off its foundation and other buildings damaged. From the sale of these unsafe buildings the sum of \$2304.66 was realized which, together with an appropriation of \$5000, comprised the total funds available for park improvements and operation. With these funds the Commission provided temporary boardwalks and three shelters but were unable to provide any facilities for bathing during the year 1908.

The Commission was untiring in its efforts to obtain adequate appropriations to develop and operate the park. Edward C. Blum, later President of the City Art Commission, was particularly enthusiastic and active in behalf of the park. By the time this country



entered World War I a small bathhouse on the bay side had been constructed and a comfort station, boardwalks, shelters, dock, water supply system and a few other incidental improvements provided.

In 1918 a disastrous fire swept through the park destroying large sections of the boardwalks, the comfort station and shelters. Because of lack of funds only temporary repairs were made. In its 1923 annual report the Fire Island State Park Commission reported that "during the past summer, owing to inadequate appropriations, the boardwalks became dangerous" and that "owing to deterioration, through lack of sufficient and timely repairs, it is not possible to properly conduct this park". The Commission further reported that only because of a transfer to it of \$2000 by the Conservation Department had it been possible to keep the park open during the season of 1923. The task of keeping the park open to the public was considered a small accomplishment in view of plans advocated by the Commission which included the construction of a large restaurant and two bathhouses and involved the further development of the area at a cost estimated at that time to be over \$348,000.

When the state legislature created the Long Island State Park Commission in the spring of 1924 as part of a comprehensive state-wide park and parkway program as recommended by Governor Smith, it succeeded the Fire Island State Park Commission as to jurisdiction over Fire Island State Park and was authorized and directed to acquire, improve and operate additional state parks and parkways on Long Island.

One of the first official acts of Commissioner Moses, as President of the newly formed Commission, was to seek a grant from the federal government of some 600 acres of land that had formed by accretion to the west of the federal lighthouse reservation. In 1825 the lighthouse site had been acquired on the westerly tip of Fire Island and the lighthouse structure constructed only a short distance east of the point, but during the succeeding hundred years over four miles of new beachlands were built up to what is now known as Point Democrat. Lighthouse service officials agreed with Commissioner Moses that these extra 600 acres of accreted lands were not needed for lighthouse purposes and necessary legislation was introduced in Congress to authorize the granting of the land to the state for park purposes. The bill was supported by Congressman Robert L. Bacon, endorsed by President Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, passed by Congress and signed on June 7, 1924.

Work was immediately started on park improvements. In 1926 a new bathhouse was erected with a capacity of three hundred and fifty, additional shelters were built and many improvements in sanitation and water supply were developed.

In cooperation with Commissioner Moses, the New York City Rotary Club in 1926 erected a crippled boys' camp. The camp, known as Camp Cheerful, consisted of nine cabins, an administration building, storehouse, infirmary, mess hall, helpers' quarters, water supply and sanitary facilities and equipment.



Fire Island State Park continued to be visited by an average of 20,000 persons each year until September 21, 1938. On that date the now famous 1938 hurricane hit Fire Island with particular force and fury at the developed section of the park just east of the lighthouse. The accompanying wall of water and high gales completely destroyed all park buildings, boardwalks, docks and water supply. Fortunately, because of several days of rain the park was deserted except for the park superintendent, Mr. Henry Herrnkind, and his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Herrnkind survived the storm by cutting a hole



(Etching by George R. Avery)

***Historic Fire Island Light is located in Long Island's oldest State Park***

through the roof of their battered and half submerged cottage. Escaping to the roof, they endured the storm, hanging on the best they could. When the storm subsided they saw nothing but wreckage. Camp Cheerful, which had been closed for the season, had completely disappeared. The sturdy Western Union building which had stood for over fifty years was also gone but several hundred feet away from the building's foundation could be seen pieces of two stories of the old watchtower.

Plans were immediately made for the reconstruction of park facilities but it was found that the old location just east of the lighthouse

had been stripped of all its protective sand dunes and would require a huge amount of fill to bring it up to a proper elevation. A new and much more desirable site for these facilities was selected on a high stretch of beach about two and a half miles west of the lighthouse and within the area ceded by the federal government in 1924.

Here was constructed during the following year a modern bathhouse with refreshment and food bar, shelters, play apparatus, superintendent's and State Police headquarters, equipment shop, concrete walks, water supply and sanitary facilities. On the inlet side of the park a large semicircular boat basin was dredged and bulkheaded with steel sheet piling making a sheltered harbor for boats and ferries. These facilities were opened to the public on June 29, 1940.

While the construction of these new facilities progressed a plan was presented by Commissioner Moses to Suffolk County for the rehabilitation and restoration of the entire length of Fire Island beach which had been devastated by the hurricane. The plan provided for the pumping in of a protective hydraulic fill and the construction thereon of a concrete roadway. Part of this proposed plan also included the construction of a bridge across Fire Island Inlet

connecting Fire Island with the Jones Beach Ocean Parkway. The inlet bridge was later dropped from the plans because of the extra cost and finally the entire plan of beach restoration as advocated by Commissioner Moses was abandoned by the County Board of Supervisors.

Regular passenger ferry service is maintained from Babylon to Fire Island State Park although the dock, which was acquired by the



*View of Fire Island State Park*

From the new boat basin showing bathhouse and other park facilities which replace those destroyed in the 1938 hurricane.

State in 1892 and from which the ferry leaves Babylon, was given to the Village of Babylon in 1940, and is now being reconstructed and enlarged.

Fire Island State Park has also been prominent in the news because of shipwrecks on its shores in recent years. The steamship *Student Prince II* bound for Nova Scotia was driven onto a bar almost directly in front of the new bathhouse on the night of March 18, 1941. The captain and crew of eight were all rescued by men from the nearby Coast Guard Station but the ship rapidly broke up and was a total loss. Also, on January 7, 1946, the 7000 ton supply ship *Rebecca Boone* bringing 21 soldiers from Europe ran aground in a dense fog just outside the park bathing area. The ship was pulled off by tugs the next day without damage.

In the early summer of 1941 a stone jetty 4800 feet long was completed at Point Democrat at the extreme westerly end of the park. This jetty was constructed by the federal government in cooperation with the Long Island State Park Commission and the County of





*Birdseye View of Fire Island State Park*



Suffolk in order to arrest the westward accretion of Fire Island and to make possible the stabilization of Fire Island Inlet. It will also serve as protection to the new park improvements located to the east. Another improvement inaugurated in 1941 was the connection of Fire Island State Park with the mainland by telephone. A public telephone in the bathhouse lobby is now available for the first time in the park's long history for the use of park visitors and boat owners who are out for a cruise or fishing trip of a day or more and wish to get in touch with their homes or offices.

Although Fire Island State Park is still accessible only by water, plans have been made to supplement the present Babylon ferry service with a short boat trip from the easterly terminus of the Jones Beach Ocean Parkway at Captree State Park. The boat basin has already been dredged at this location. It is planned to have the dock, access road and parking field completed at an early date.

#### MONTAUK POINT AND HITHER HILLS STATE PARKS

The first new state park to be established by the present Commission after its creation in 1924 was a large area now known as Hither Hills State Park, located on the Montauk peninsula not so many miles from one of the proposed parks that had been envisioned by the Park Commission of 1902. Hither Hills consists of 1755 acres of high cliffs and a wide expanse of sand dunes with frontage on both the Atlantic Ocean and Napeague Bay. This park was to be connected by a parkway with Montauk Point State Park, a smaller area of 158 acres around the government lighthouse. Hither Hills was near the scene in 1924 of a grandiose plan of Carl G. Fisher for a Miami Beach of the north and because the owners had dreams of having millionaires for neighbors and a Florida boom at Montauk, the Commission's plans for acquiring the area ran into unexpected difficulties. Early negotiations with the owners progressed satisfactorily until the announcement of the Fisher purchase of most all the remaining lands at the Point and his scheme for huge hotels, casinos, yacht clubs, office buildings, golf courses, polo fields, etc., all served by ocean liners and high speed de luxe trains to New York City. Carl Fisher made his fortune as founder of the Presto-O-Lite Company and became famous as the builder of the Indianapolis Speedway and developer of Miami Beach. His plans for Montauk were not taken lightly. The owners dropped negotiations with the Commission and signed an option with Mr. Fisher who immediately notified the Commission that he would only sell a small, unwanted portion of the proposed park property at a ridiculously high price. The Commission then appropriated the property on August 11, 1924, before the Fisher option was exercised. A series of law suits followed which were not ended until a Court of Appeals decision ten years later which came at about the same time as the announcement of the sale of the Fisher development, seven-story office building and all, for unpaid taxes.

A few years prior to the announced tax sale (which was later adjusted so as to save part of the original development) Mr. Fisher attempted to sell all his remaining holdings to the state. In a letter



dated September 29, 1931, he wrote "I am willing to take a net cash loss to myself of \$1,000,000 on these properties if your Park Board can use them." Before Carl Fisher's real estate bubble burst the Commission obtained a dedication of the connecting parkway right of way over the picturesque rolling hills from Hither Hills State Park to Montauk Point which now affords a scenic drive of unique landscape with views of Napeague Bay on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. Hither Hills State Park has been developed with a bathhouse, picnic facilities and large camping area on the ocean front. Much of the area is wooded and some of the sand dunes along the



*Montauk Light*

ocean front reach a height of eighty feet. At Montauk Point State Park, 132 miles from New York City, a large parking field, refreshment stand and picnic area have been provided adjacent to the famous government lighthouse which was erected in 1795. During World War II the quaint fishing village of Montauk, located about half-way between Hither Hills State Park and Montauk Point, was taken over almost entirely by the armed forces. At Camp Hero on the Point huge coast defense guns were concealed in the irregular terrain. One of the largest naval stations for testing torpedoes was located on Fort Pond Bay and Carl Fisher's elaborate Montauk Manor Hotel was used to house its personnel. Montauk also played host to the armed forces in 1898 when Col. Theodore Roosevelt brought his victorious but fever-ridden Rough Riders there to recuperate on their return from the Spanish-American War.

For nearly a hundred years Montauk has been the center of the eastern Long Island fishing industry and although the area was closed to all sport fishermen during the war many of the 300,000 people who visited Hither Hills and Montauk Point State Parks before the war came to try their luck at surf casting from the shores of these two parks.

## WILDWOOD AND SUNKEN MEADOW STATE PARKS

Neither of the two state parks on the north shore of Long Island has any particular historical background. Wildwood State Park, located at Wading River in the Town of Riverhead, consists of 395 acres of beautiful woodlands on the high cliffs overlooking Long Island Sound. The area was acquired for park purposes in 1925 partly by purchase and partly by gift from the heirs of Roland G. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell planned the area as a woodland country estate. On the top of the cliff he erected a huge brick and stone mansion with several auxiliary buildings needed to operate the estate. The mansion was designed by Stanford White who, before he was murdered by Harry Thaw, became world famous as an architect for millionaires. Mr. Mitchell also hired Olmsted Brothers who laid out Central Park and many others throughout the country, to plan the landscaping for the estate. After spending over \$100,000 on his country home he died in June, 1906, before the building was fully completed. It remained uncompleted and never occupied for the next twenty years and became known as "Mitchell's Folly". Arthur M. Mitchell of Babylon offered his interest in his late brother's estate as a gift and the remaining outstanding interest was acquired for \$82,000. The Mitchell heirs suggested the name "Wildwood" for the new park.



*Camping at Wildwood*

Today Wildwood State Park is one of the most attractive natural parks on Long Island. It has fine woodland campsites, picnic areas and excellent bathing beach on the Sound. Roland Mitchell's mansion could not be used for any suitable public park purposes and was torn down by Work Relief forces in 1934.

Sunken Meadow State Park, about 30 miles west of Wildwood, was assembled from several smaller parcels but most of its present area of 520 acres was acquired from the late George B. B. Lamb and his wife, Antoinette Storrs Lamb. A small section of the beach consisting of about 400 feet of frontage on Long Island Sound was conveyed to the State by the Town of Smithtown in 1928. The park takes its name from the low meadowland which separates the narrow sandy beach from the uplands. A winding stream known as Sunken Meadow Creek flows through the meadows and for a number of years the only access to the bathing beach was by means of a quarter-mile-long boardwalk built on stilts across the meadows and creek. Much of the meadow has now been filled in for parking and a modern bridge and roadway for automobiles has replaced the walk. On the beach



which is one of the safest and most attractive on Long Island Sound, has been constructed a large brick bathhouse and cafeteria building. The upland, wooded section of the park overlooking the Sound provides some unusually attractive picnic areas fully equipped with fireplaces, tables, comfort stations and refreshment stands.

The main entrance to the park is now located on Route 25-A between the Villages of Kings Park and Fort Salonga. To the west of the park entrance was located the hilltop fort used by the British in the Revolutionary War. The fort was overpowered by colonial



*Airview of Sunken Meadow*

patriots from Connecticut who captured the officers and men and carried away its guns. A parkway spur from the Northern State Parkway to the park is being planned for future construction.

#### BELMONT LAKE STATE PARK

A new interest and importance will be attached to Belmont Lake State Park with the completion of an easterly extension of the Southern State Parkway to Deer Park Avenue north of the Village of Babylon, the completion of which was interrupted by the stoppage of all construction during the war. Formerly reached only by local town roads, the park will now be readily accessible to all motorists.

In 1864 access to this area also played an important part in shaping its future use for according to early records it was because of the "fields, fresh water brooks and pond and its easy access by way of excellent dry sandy roads" that August Belmont chose this location as the site for his Nursery Stud Farm and there established a country estate of 1100 acres devoted to the breeding of thoroughbred horses whose names were to become internationally famous.

With the extension of the Southern State Parkway furnishing a new means of access to this area will come thousands of new visitors who know nothing of Belmont Nursery Stud Farm, of the "dry sandy roads", or of the natural beauty or other advantages which in later



years and under different conditions of usage also made it a logical site for a State Park. Even by closely inspecting all existing landmarks it is not easy to visualize this large estate as it was during the height of its glory.

By the time Kingfisher, The Ill-Used, Matador, Fiddlesticks and other famous stallions of the nineteenth century were holding court at this North Babylon estate it had been made into one of the most complete establishments for the breeding and raising of racing horses in this country. Over 500 acres were under cultivation and furnishing all sustenance for horses and other livestock. About 150 more acres were down in grass together with some 50 acres of paddocks. In addition to a 24-room mansion which was completed in 1868 and served as the Belmont country home, there were more than thirty other buildings on the estate. On the forty-acre lake, close to the main house, was a boat house. In back of the house was a recreation building containing squash courts, game rooms and the master's carriage shed. An ice house, conservatory, and dog kennels completed the building arrangement in the immediate vicinity of the main residence. A quarter mile south of the residence were located the main buildings for the accommodation of the thoroughbreds. These consisted of a huge structure over one hundred feet long with sufficient space to exercise horses during inclement winter months. Adjacent buildings contained stalls, boxes, saddle rooms and feed storage. This entire group of buildings was connected by covered and enclosed walks. Close by the main stables were trainers' residences, cook house and bunk house with accommodations for fifty stable boys. To the west of the stables was a fine level mile track with sheds and a grandstand where Belmont and his friends watched and clocked trials of future champions.

Incidental smaller buildings were scattered over the estate. Among these were two silos, a blacksmith shop, and on the south end of the lake a small grist mill which for a time prepared the horses' grain. The main farm buildings consisting of large barn, cow shed, pig pens, etc., were located on the east side of the lake. In this area were also located five farm cottages. The entire holdings were served by a complete water system supplied from two windmill-powered wells.

Mrs. August Belmont was a daughter of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry who in 1853 opened Japan to western civilization and who was a brother of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry. Oliver Hazard Perry won the naval battle of Lake Erie over the British on September 10, 1813, and sent the famous message to President James Madison,—“We have met the enemy and they are ours.” From a Pittsburgh junkyard Mrs. Belmont resurrected two cannons from one of the English ships captured during that battle and had them set up in front of the mansion. Under a group of large Norway Spruce to the north of the mansion she established a cemetery for the family's pets. It was here that she interred her pet horse and marked the grave with an appropriate headstone.

After the expenditure of large sums of money and after more than twenty years of experimenting, Mr. Belmont became convinced that the location of this famous stud farm was not the best for the





*The Belmont Mansion as it appeared in 1932 when used as  
Park headquarters*

This building, constructed in 1868, has been torn down. The two British cannons, one of which is shown above, still remain in place.



*Park Commission office building*

Of colonial architecture on west side of Belmont Lake was constructed on the site of old Episcopal Church. Many persons mistakenly believe this office to be the old Belmont Mansion.



raising of thoroughbreds whose young bones required grazing land with more lime in the soil. Not content with anything but the best for his horses, in 1885 he moved his entire racing stock to a new establishment in Kentucky but continued to spend much of his time at the Babylon estate which became a place for the wintering of full-grown horses and for the care of ailing ones. He was principally known around Babylon during this period for his vigilance in preventing any trespassing on his estate. Sometimes pedestrians along his private roads were prominent men of Babylon out for a walk through the countryside and he was acquainted with them, but it made no difference who they were. All intruders were ordered off.

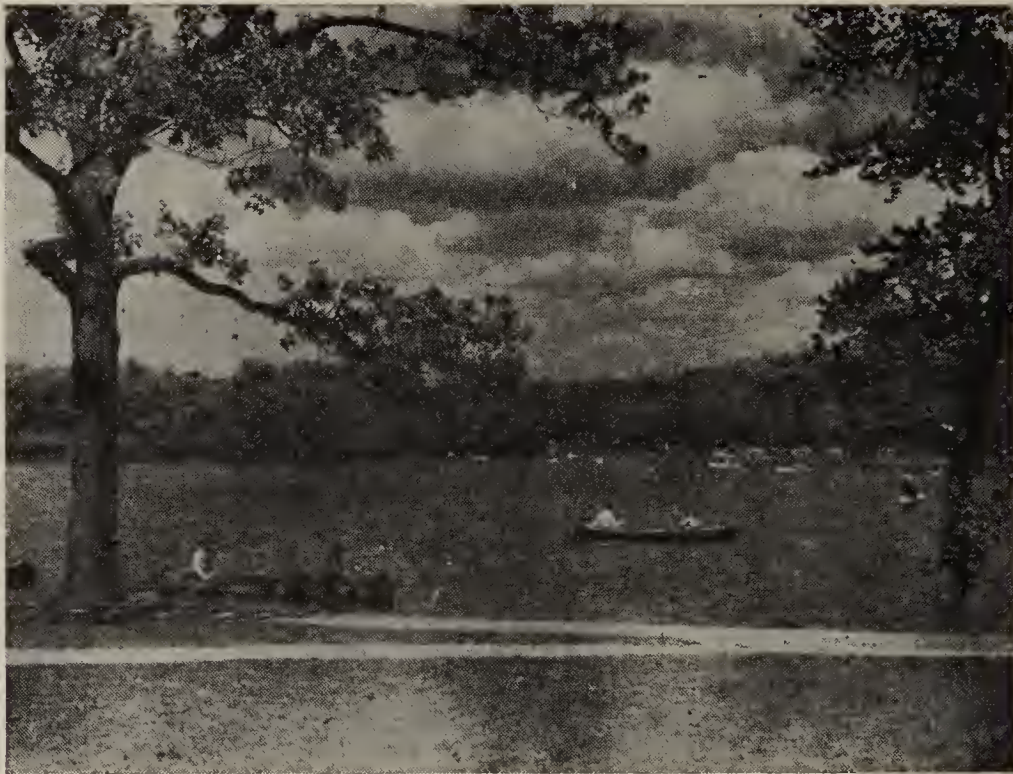
On November 24, 1890, August Belmont 1st died and the once glorious Nursery Stud Farm with all its remaining stock was scheduled to be sold at auction. *The Spirit of the Times* in its issue of August 20, 1891, commented on the proposed sale as follows:

Although sentiment plays, as a rule, but a very minor part in the everyday life of the present day, it is impossible but that racing men will feel some trace of it when the famous Nursery Stud Farm, near Babylon, L. I., where the late Hon. August Belmont spent so many thousands of dollars in working out his ideas of what a fine breeding farm should be, is sold under the hammer. . . . In the pastures of the Nursery Farm have grazed a host of thoroughbreds, whose names form an integral portion of the annals of American racing. The good sportsman who created this charming property from the rough, scrubby stretches that it formerly comprised, has also created a tradition of honorable, upright conduct of a great racing stable, second to none in the world. We sincerely hope that the Nursery Farm will pass into the hands of some gentleman whose pride it will be to keep the savor of its name as sweet in the nostrils of the racing community as it has always hitherto been.

Twenty-nine racing horses at the farm were sold at auction but the entire remaining estate passed to the then 37-year-old August Belmont, Jr. The second August Belmont made further improvements and for a number of years the estate was used as a sportsmen's paradise for Mr. Belmont, his family and friends. The two rows of tall spruce along the road leading to the west from the estate were planted by him around 1895 and still remain as an attractive approach to the area from the west. Mr. Belmont not only continued to provide the best accommodations for his livestock, but also gave thought to the spiritual well-being of his employees and followers. Just to the north of the family mansion he erected an Episcopal Chapel, known as St. Elizabeth, and employed a rector, the late Reverend Eugene Fay, to preach and care for the Parish.

The younger Belmont devoted much of his time to the breeding of stock for the cavalry of the U. S. Army and when the World War came in 1917 he turned over a large portion of his estate to the Army Air Corps for use as a training camp. In turn he was made





*View of Belmont Lake*

As it appears today from near the site of the old mansion. August Belmont's boat-house was located between the two trees in the foreground.



*Old dairy and livestock barns*

On east side of Belmont Lake, used for 14 years as equipment and repair shops, have now been demolished.



a Major. The camp with extensive barracks was maintained on the estate for the duration of the war and was known as Camp Dam.

When August Belmont, Jr., died on December 10, 1924, the lands passed to his widow, Eleanor Robson Belmont, who continued to live there. Mrs. Belmont was born in England and later became a famous American actress and playwright. After her husband's death no one in the family had the inclination or means to carry on the name of Belmont in the sport of kings.

Early in 1925 she sold all but a small portion of the estate to Cadman H. Frederick who promptly subdivided most of it into lots. The remaining 158 acres, including the lake, the mansion and the main farm buildings, Mr. Frederick sold to the State of New York for \$97,000 by deed dated May 10, 1926. The following year the State also purchased all the lands retained by Mrs. Belmont. Since that time additional acquisitions for park purposes have brought the total area of Belmont Lake State Park to over 350 acres, a mere one-third of the original area of the Belmont estate. But many things still remain in this small fraction of the original estate to remind one of its past fame and glory.

On the east side of the park, the present refreshment stand and cafeteria is the same structure built by August Belmont, 1st, in 1870 for a pig pen. One of the present park comfort stations likewise at one time housed prize poultry. Plans have now been prepared to replace these buildings with modern facilities. In 1927 the maintenance and equipment shops of the Long Island State Park Commission were moved from Mineola into the original dairy barn on the east side of the lake and remained there until 1941. The family mansion was used as the main park administration headquarters until 1935 when it was razed. During that period former bedrooms were used as executive offices and the squash court in the rear of the main building, as well as other rooms, were used for drafting rooms by the engineering staff.

In 1929 the voters of the Village of Babylon approved a conveyance to the State of a corridor connecting Argyle Park on Montauk Highway with Belmont Lake. This corridor, about three and one-half miles in length, borders a swift flowing stream along which have been constructed foot trails, bridle paths, benches and rustic bridges. Just south of the Sunrise Highway the Belmont Trail widens into what is known as Southard's Pond area, where future plans provide for further improvements. The trail system between Belmont Lake and the Village park has insured for all time the conservation of beauty and usefulness of this fresh water stream.

The present new office building completed in 1935 was constructed on the site of Belmont's Episcopal Chapel which together with all its furnishings had been given to the Mother Church and taken to Flushing. Although the old mansion is now gone the two cannons captured by Commodore Perry and placed on the front lawn by Mrs. Belmont still remain in their original position. Upon inspection of these, one will notice the English crests cast in relief. The stately spruce trees now form a shaded mall on each side of which will run



the pavement of the Southern State Parkway. "In Memory of My Faithful Dog Robin, May 24th, 1875", and other inscriptions can still be read on the headstones marking the graves of the family's pets beneath the group of spruce trees in front of the new office building.

But gone are the "dry, sandy roads", the paddocks and the old man who used to chase occasional intruders. In their place is a fine State Park already visited by 235,000 persons each year and now destined to see even more. Popular with visitors are the skating and boating facilities on the lake which was drained in the winter of 1933 and graded to a uniform depth of about three feet. The grading and cleaning out of the lake was carried forward as a Work Relief project and involved the removal of two thousand tree stumps and thousands of yards of muck which had accumulated since the time it was enlarged and cleaned out by August Belmont prior to 1870. Around the north end of the lake a nature trail has been established with marked specimens of flora and fauna of Long Island. Some of the animals and birds on exhibit along the trail are fox, turtles, snakes, frogs, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, owls, hawks, etc. To the north of the old dairy barns on the east side of the lake are situated the play fields and picnic areas with tables, drinking fountains, fireplaces, etc. The repair and equipment shops are now housed north of the administration building on the west side of the lake and the vitally needed space, formerly occupied by the unsightly old barns, is now available for public usage.

With the coming of better means of access to Belmont Lake State Park and the consequent increase in the number of visitors, the use of this small additional space becomes very important. The park area on the east side of the lake is quite inadequate to meet future needs and considerable additional land must be acquired.

Efforts have been made from time to time to obtain funds from private sources to round out the park. A few years ago Mr. Perry Belmont, the then only surviving son of August Belmont, Sr., suggested that it would be appropriate to place a large bronze statue of his father at a suitable location in the park. The statue, a remarkable likeness of the founder of the Belmont fortune, was owned by his son. He was willing to pay for moving it but felt that he could not donate sufficient funds to acquire additional lands to make a suitable site in the already overcrowded park area, so his suggestion was abandoned. For a number of years Mr. Perry Belmont used the Belmont Nursery Farm as his legal residence and was twice elected to Congress from this district. He was, incidentally, the only person ever elected to Congress from the Town of Babylon. Perry Belmont died on May 25, 1947, at the age of ninety-six.

Looking back a half century ago, the wish expressed in regard to the future use of the Belmont estate by the editors of *The Spirit of the Times* seems unimportant in view of the public benefit now derived from even this small part of the original area. Associations of the past that prompted the wish, however, still linger and will continue as a matter of interest and reflection to all who visit Belmont Lake State Park.

## HECKSCHER STATE PARK

Never in the history of the State of New York has the acquisition of land for park purposes had such far-reaching results as did the establishment of Heckscher State Park at East Islip.

It was the subject of actions in every possible court from the County Court of Suffolk County to the Supreme Court of the United States and involved twenty-five separate appellate proceedings.

It was the cause of a special summer session of the state legislature.

It held up the expenditure of park funds throughout the entire state for nearly a year.

It was the subject of mass meetings, printed pamphlets and newspaper campaigns.

It was instrumental in changing the route of a parkway more than thirty miles away.

The property involved in the controversy having these far-reaching results was formerly the George C. Taylor estate of 1500 acres on the Great South Bay in the Town of Islip. It was wild and picturesque property with a wild and picturesque history.

George C. Taylor, who assembled this large tract, had been an unusual and eccentric man of considerable means. In 1886 he built there a large and ornate country home. He erected about 30 other buildings, such as carriage barn, stables, dairy barns, greenhouses, and quarters for his employees, etc. The wooded areas of the estate he stocked with deer and game birds. For proper effect he had peacocks and a herd of elk wandering about the lawns of the mansion. Inside he displayed seven cupid-like statues of himself, supposedly representing the seven ages of man. The spacious porches of the mansion overlooked a broad canal, starting at the far edge of the lawn and stretching over half a mile to the bay. In the canal he kept a yacht for cruising and fishing in bay and ocean. In fact everything was apparently perfect for the normal life of a country gentleman.

But George C. Taylor's life at his Islip estate was far from what the good people of the local community considered normal. He isolated himself on the estate with a common-law wife. Their daughter was rarely seen off the private grounds. They hired special tutors and instructors for her and when the bicycle craze came along they imported a bicycle instructor from England who brought with him all available models of English-made bicycles. They also had constructed a special bicycle house for storing and repairing the newly acquired equipment. The outcome of these activities was that the girl who had been so zealously guarded unexpectedly ran off and was married to her bicycle instructor by a local Justice of the Peace.

This may or may not have contributed to George C. Taylor's eccentricities. In any event he and his companion became heavy drinkers. At times the winding staircase in the three-story mansion became hard to navigate so he had an elevator installed. Other tales relate how he built a log cabin not far from the mansion where he



kept his liquor stores and where he slept after one of his frequent quarrels with his common-law wife.

This wild gossip which had kept the locality excited for so long a time came to an end in 1908 when George C. Taylor and his companion died within a few days of each other.

The large estate passed to three sisters and a brother and several of their kin but the property remained practically unused and unoccupied for the next sixteen years. These heirs, about eighteen in number, formed a corporation, known as the Deer Range Corporation, for the purpose of better handling the estate. The corporation of heirs carried the property at quite some expense and tried without success to sell it. The only use made of it was by Percy Pyne, 2nd, one of the heirs who established a private shooting preserve on it where ducks, pheasants and other wild life, tamed by regular feeding, became easy prey.

That was the status of the Taylor Estate when in the summer of 1924 the newly created Long Island State Park Commission was investigating locations for new state parks and for a headquarters for the Commission's staff. The Taylor estate was found to be for sale and considered suitable for both purposes. After negotiations between Robert Moses, President of the Long Island State Park Commission, and the officers of the Deer Range Corporation, the officers agreed to give an option to the State to purchase the property for \$250,000 in anticipation of the funds being made available by a Park Bond Issue Act to be voted on by the people of the State. The new park was to be known as Deer Range State Park. The action of the officers, however, could not be binding without the consent of the stockholders so a meeting of the stockholders was called to pass on the matter.

When it became known that the State intended to acquire the Taylor estate for a park, W. Kingsland Macy, the President of the nearby Timber Point Country Club and Horace Havemeyer, his brother-in-law, both of whom were owners of nearby property, became alarmed for fear that a park at this location would be detrimental to the neighborhood. Many of the Taylor heirs were their friends to whom they made an offer to buy the estate themselves at the same price offered by the State. As a result the option to the State was disapproved by a majority of the heirs over the protest of the officers. The corporation then voted to sell the property to the newly formed Pauchogue Land Corporation. The president of the new land company informed the Park Commission that it was opposed to the establishment of a state park on the Taylor estate not only because it was believed that a public park would be objectionable to nearby estate owners, but because a park at that location would also make it difficult for new estates to spring up near enough to the country club for it to benefit.

An active campaign was started to create sentiment against a state park at East Islip and a combination was formed between the officers of the Pauchogue Land Corporation and the large estate owners of Nassau County whose object was to block the proposed Northern State Parkway. This welding of interests brought about

a change in the parkway route in Nassau County where it now swings toward the south to avoid the estates in the Wheatley Hills section. The change was made, however, only after the payment to the State of nearly a quarter of a million dollars. In later years, after the completion of the parkway, those who brought about the change were sorry that it had been made and wished that it were more convenient for their use.

The combined opposition in no way changed the Commission's plan to acquire the Taylor estate and on November 4, 1924, when the Park Bond Issue Act was approved at the polls, allotting \$1,000,000 for park development on Long Island, the Park Commission resolved to take the Taylor estate by eminent domain. All necessary papers to effectuate the acquisition were prepared for the signature of Alfred E. Smith, the Governor.

Before Governor Smith signed the papers he held a hearing in the Hotel Biltmore in New York City at which the Long Island State Park Commission was represented by Robert Moses, Judge Townsend Scudder, Raymond P. McNulty, George D. Carrington and H. L. Bowlby and at which the officers of the Patchogue Land Corporation and their representatives stated their objections to the proposed park. Mr. Havemeyer asked, "Where can a poor millionaire go?" This went unanswered but when someone objected to being "over-run with rabble from the city", the Governor said, "Why, that's me". He then signed the papers.

Thus began probably the most intensive campaign to block a public project and hamstring a public body ever carried on in this State. The representatives of the newly formed corporation, outspoken in their intentions to do everything in their power to prevent the establishment of the park, proceeded to launch their attack along all possible lines. On December 31, 1924, they brought suit against the Commission claiming that the taking of the land by the method of eminent domain, known as entry and appropriation, had been illegal because the legislature had not yet made available to the Commission any of the funds authorized by the Park Bond Issue referendum. In order to make this objection hold they sent eminent counsel to Albany to urge the legislature not to appropriate any funds out of the Bond Act to be used on Long Island. Meanwhile pamphlets were printed and articles appeared in newspapers denouncing the action taken by the Commission. Bills were introduced in Albany to abolish or cripple the Commission and to take away the power of acquiring land by entry and appropriation.

The late Judge George H. Furman of Patchogue was the first of a long list of judges to hear the lawsuit brought by the Patchogue Land Corporation. He granted the corporation an order declaring the seizure by entry and appropriation illegal.

In the meantime the opposition before the 1925 legislature resulted in a delay of the whole state-wide park program. A bill appropriating funds authorized by the Park Bond Issue referendum of the previous November was passed containing provisions taking away control of the acquisition of land from the various regional park commissions of which the Long Island commission was one.



Governor Smith vetoed the bill on April 1, 1925, with the result that no funds were available for the state-wide park program as authorized by the previous referendum. He then called a special session of the legislature for June 2, 1925, but again at this extra session the objectionable appropriation bill was passed and again it was vetoed by the Governor.



*Lt. Governor Herbert Lehman and Ex-Governor Alfred E. Smith  
officially receive the park from August Heckscher*

The late August Heckscher, long a champion of public recreation facilities, became interested in the controversy and decided to give the State \$262,000 (the amount of the original option price plus interest) so as to enable the Commission to pay for the property. Upon receipt of this gift the Commission again appropriated the property on September 25, 1925, in order to meet the legal objection that it had been without funds in hand at the time the property was first taken.

Shortly thereafter the Court of Appeals sustained the Pauchogue Land Corporation and held that the first taking of the Taylor estate was invalid for lack of actually available funds but indicated that a reappropriation of the property when moneys were in hand would

cure all defects. In the meantime an action to eject the Commission from the property was started and on the same day that the Court of Appeals handed down the above decision, Judge Selah B. Strong called the new action to trial at Riverhead although counsel for the Commission was busy at the time in another court. The President of the Commission was present to testify but the Commission could not go on with the trial in the absence of counsel and default judgments were entered against Robert Moses, President of the Park Commission, Judge Townsend Scudder and Clifford L. Jackson, the other Commissioners, individually for \$22,000. The county sheriff acting on the judgment served papers on employees of the Commission who were on the property ordering them to vacate. The judgment was later stayed and on appeal was reversed by the Appellate Courts.

The taking of the property by appropriation for the second time with Mr. Heckscher's gift gave new impetus to the battle. The main trial, marked by intense interest and bitter feeling, was heard by Judge James Dunne at Riverhead. It lasted for three weeks and was made notable by the appearance as witnesses of such public figures as Governor Smith, August Heckscher, Commissioner Moses, Judge Scudder, Mr. Macy and others. Judge Dunne held that the State had good title to the property by reason of the second appropriation made after the receipt of the gift from August Heckscher and a jury awarded the Pauchogue Land Corporation the sum of six cents as damages suffered for the period between the first and second appropriation.

The land corporation contended that the award was insufficient and that both the Heckscher gift and the second appropriation of the property were invalid. On appeal, however, the judgment was affirmed in the Appellate Division and finally in the Court of Appeals on July 9, 1928.

A writ of error was immediately sought by the land corporation. This was denied by Chief Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo of the New York State Court of Appeals on September 1, 1928. An attempt was then made to bring the case to the Supreme Court of the United States on constitutional grounds. On January 21, 1929, this court handed down a decision in favor of the park commission and denied the application for a writ of certiorari made by the corporation.

The State Court of Claims then determined the amount which the state had to pay. Although the Pauchogue Land Corporation paid only \$250,000 for the property in 1924, it alleged that the \$262,000 contributed by Mr. Heckscher was grossly inadequate. In this new action it was claimed that the property in 1925 was worth \$1,468,000. The Court of Claims made an award of \$275,000, substantially agreeing with contentions of the park commission.

During the years these legal fireworks were taking place and the consequent indecisive status of the new park, the Park Commission acquired Belmont Lake State Park and established its administration headquarters there with funds finally made available by the Legislature in 1926. These funds, incidentally, were appropriated as authorized by the earlier Park Bond issue referendum and in the exact





*Commissioner Robert Moses speaking from the porch of the Taylor Mansion at the Dedication  
Ceremonies held on June 2, 1929*

manner that had been originally recommended by Governor Smith to the regular and special sessions of the 1925 legislature.

Formidable opposition was thus defeated but the battle had been a real one which had been closely followed by the press. Ever since his role in the Heckscher case, Mr. Macy showed generous cooperation and interest in plans for furthering the state park program on Long Island and especially the extension of the parkway system in Suffolk County.

On June 2, 1929, with the controversy over the acquisition of the Taylor estate closed, the name of the park was changed from Deer



*The Taylor Mansion as it appeared prior to demolition in 1933*

Range State Park to Heckscher State Park at appropriate ceremonies attended by August Heckscher, Lt.-Governor Herbert H. Lehman, ex-Governor Smith and other state and local officials.

The speeches made on this occasion were delivered from the front porch of George C. Taylor's mansion to an assembled crowd of several thousand people.

In 1933 the old mansion was demolished. No longer needed as an administration office, its huge rooms with wood carvings, gas light chandeliers and statues were found useless for park purposes and too costly to maintain. On its site is a large boulder with a bronze plaque reading:

HECKSCHER STATE PARK  
A GIFT FROM  
AUGUST HECKSCHER  
TO THE PEOPLE  
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Many other changes have been made since the estate was last used by George Taylor. The bicycle house where his young daughter first met her bicycle instructor was moved to the bay front and has



been used for the past fifteen years as a refreshment stand at the west beach area. Likewise the present bathhouse at this area which will soon be replaced by a modern building was originally a boat house on the canal. A new modern bathhouse was constructed in 1931 at the east beach area with accommodations for 1700 bathers. The log cabin used for liquor storage and "nights out" by old George remains in the park. His main carriage barn has been converted into a recreation hall for outing picnic groups. The pony barns at the pony ring were part of the original pig pen. The old dairy barns are



*Airview of the East Beach area at Heckscher State Park showing modern bathhouse and game area adjacent to parking field*

now used as a garage and machine shop. The Taylor stables still house horses which may be hired for riding on extensive bridle paths throughout the park.

The elk are gone but many of the 325,000 persons who visit the park each year to enjoy bathing, picnicking, riding, hiking, or games have seen quail, pheasants, ducks, some of the herd of 200 wild deer and other game that live a sheltered life within this 1500 acre park.

August Heckscher died on April 26, 1941, at the age of 92. In the words of former Governor Smith "Heckscher State Park will remain as a monument to his public spirit and generosity as long as the State endures."

Upon Mr. Heckscher's death the Long Island State Park Commission consisting of Robert Moses, Clifford L. Jackson and Herbert Bayard Swope, adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, August Heckscher courageously intervened in a suit against the State by selfish private interests and by a



generous and timely gift of \$262,000 made possible the establishment of Heckscher State Park at East Islip, Long Island, and

WHEREAS, August Heckscher's death on April 26, 1941 terminated a long career distinguished by this and many other beneficences and countless evidences of public spirit,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Long Island State Park Commission hereby expresses to Mrs. Heckscher its profound sympathy and renews its assurance of the lasting gratitude of the People of the State of New York for August Heckscher's contributions to their welfare.

In 1936 the Commission accepted on behalf of the State of New York a deed of gift of approximately 200 acres of property near the northeasterly boundary of Heckscher State Park to be used as an arboretum or park for the culture of trees and shrubs. This gift was made by Mrs. Bayard James in memory of her father, W. Bayard Cutting, and the property is to be called the "Bayard Cutting Arboretum". Two years later Mrs. James donated an additional 382 acres so that the entire area now consists of 582 acres. As expressed in the deeds the purposes are to provide an oasis of beauty and of quiet for the pleasure, rest and refreshment of those who delight in outdoor beauty, and to bring about a greater appreciation and understanding of the value and importance of informal planting.

The State has not as yet taken actual possession. Mrs. James and her mother, Mrs. Cutting, still reside on the property and Mrs. James has reserved the full use and benefit of the property so long as she or her mother is living. Local property taxes continue to be paid until the State takes possession.

In connection with the gift of the property and in order to provide for its minimum maintenance requirements, Mrs. Cutting has established a trust fund with Bank of New York and Trust Company as financial trustee. After the State takes possession of the property, the income from this fund will be controlled by a Board of Trustees, and will be paid to the State so long as the property is administered for the purposes set forth in the deed. The Trustees are the Hon. Lady Lindsay (American born wife of a former British Ambassador to the United States); Gilmore D. Clark, Consulting Landscape Architect for various park commissions and other agencies; Henry V. Hubbard of the firm of Olmsted Brothers of Boston, and also President, American Society Landscape Architects; Barklie Henry and Grenville Clark of New York. They are to select their own successors.

The property is part of the country estate called "Westbrook", the development of which was started by W. Bayard Cutting in 1887, with the assistance of the late Frederick Law Olmsted. Mr. Cutting was deeply interested in preserving and developing the natural beauty of the place and also in bringing to this country fine specimens of coniferous evergreens from all parts of the world. Today this property is not only beautiful but of great interest to all students of



arboriculture and landscape design. Above all it is an outstanding demonstration of what can be done with native landscape and indigenous plants.

The January, 1934, issue of *Country Life* contained an illustrated article on the pinetum at "Westbrook" in which it was stated that no positive records of the exact size of the trees set out by Mr. Cutting in 1887 is known, but it is believed they were of average nursery size, or about three to five feet tall. The largest specimen now at "Westbrook" is a Cilician Fir (*Abies Cilicica*), which is over seventy-five feet in height. There are many other foreign fir and spruce trees of great size. Some which have found a congenial home at "Westbrook", can only be found elsewhere in Pacific Slope regions. Apart from the collection of evergreens, the educational and artistic value of "Westbrook" depends chiefly upon the natural beauty of the landscape and intelligent use and care of native American plants.

After Mr. Cutting's death, Mrs. Cutting and their daughter, Mrs. James, desired to carry on the ideas of Mr. Cutting and to preserve the place as a haven of beauty and for the study of arboriculture. Mrs. James selected the Long Island State Park Commission as the body best able to carry on the ideas of her father, her mother and herself.

This will be one of the few arboretums in this part of the Northeastern States. The Arnold Arboretum, maintained under the supervision of Harvard University, is the finest in the country. Professor Charles S. Sargent, head of that arboretum for many years, took great interest in "Westbrook" and visited it frequently. The present beauty and scientific interest of the Cutting Estate testify to the foresight, study and knowledge which went into its creation and which have been continuously expended on it for the past fifty years.

The Long Island State Park Commission believes that the preservation of the property for these purposes will ultimately be of great benefit to the public. A spur of the Southern State Parkway will run alongside of the Arboretum into Heckscher State Park where seekers of more active recreation can find ample accommodations.

#### VALLEY STREAM, HEMPSTEAD LAKE AND MASSAPEQUA STATE PARKS

When Commissioner Moses persuaded the City of New York in 1925 to dedicate 2200 acres of city water supply areas in Nassau County for state park and parkway purposes, the most valuable single addition to the Long Island State Park and Parkway System was obtained. These areas furnished the backbone of the Southern State Parkway, the Meadowbrook State Parkway, the Wantagh State Parkway and the Bethpage State Parkway, established Valley Stream, Hempstead Lake and Massapequa State Parks and protected for all time five of the most important fresh water streams in Nassau County.

Prior to the acquisition of these streams, swamp lands and adjacent areas by the old City of Brooklyn in 1874 for the development of a water supply, they had remained for the most part wild and inaccessible for centuries. Kenneth Roberts in his popular historical novel *Oliver Wiswell*, a story of the Loyalists during the

Revolutionary War, vividly describes these same areas as impenetrable, mosquito-infested swamps and inland waterways surrounded by dense thickets where hundreds of Loyalists lived in huts made of brush and leaves and hid from the rebels while awaiting a British victory by General Howe. The entrances to the swampland hideouts were watched by unsuspected loyal mill owners and intruders were quickly ambushed. Even organized militiamen under Colonel Birdsall were unsuccessful in routing the Loyalists from the Hempstead swamps according to the following quotations from the book:

Around three o'clock a sonorous croaking of frogs told us we had reached Demott's Mill Pond; and there we waited in the bushes, fighting mosquitoes, until the east grew pale and the blackbirds in the brush along the pond, coming to life with weak chirpings, clambered clumsily up and down the marsh grass as if stricken with rheumatic pains.

Approaching us through a haze of dust that overhung the road was a long column of men—a slovenly column that marched irregularly and out of step, so that it had the look of a gigantic centipede whose feet hurt.

I lowered myself against the wall of the mill in a sunny spot and spread the blanket over my legs.

The column drew closer and closer, and from it rose a sound of babbling, a kind of chattering such as might come from a cage of animals. At the head of the column, on a sway-backed cart horse with shaggy fetlocks and droopy head, rode a paunchy, red-faced man. He had an upturned nose and little eyes that peered out from between fat lids, and looked surprisingly like a pig on horseback.

At a bellowed order from this porcine leader, the long line of men halted and shuffled their feet in the dusty road. There may have been five hundred of them, and they were as scurvy-looking as those citizen soldiers who had stared surlily at my father and me on the night we were driven out of Milton. For the most part they were pockmarked; their hair hung lankily from under sweat-stained hats; many were stockingless; and their coats were patched and foul. Even from where I lay I could hear them cursing purposelessly.

As the pig-eyed leader rode into the mill yard, Demott appeared in the doorway. He seemed pleased at the sight of the paunchy rider, and greeted him heartily as Colonel Birdsall. "What brings you here at this time of day, Colonel?" he asked.

"You know damned well," Birdsall said. His voice had a squealing resonance something like that of a sow impatiently crying out for food. "I'm after the damned Tories hiding in this swamp; and I think you know a good way in, Demott!"



Demott was indignant. "I'm a law-abiding citizen, Colonel! You've never had trouble with me, and you never will! It'd be as much as my life is worth to do anything for a Tory. No, Colonel, I'm hiding no Tories!"

Birdsall yelped contemptuously. "Pah! You can't live on the edge of this swamp and not know what goes on in it! Do you deny there's Loyalists hiding in here?"

From a distance we watched Birdsall send flanking parties of militiamen around the swamp; faintly heard his bellowing voice ordering other parties to go straight in.

"Dead or alive!" we heard him shouting. "Drive 'em out dead or alive! \* \* \* Dead or alive!"

All through the morning and the early afternoon we heard far-off shouts and shots—single detonations; ripples of musketry fire; then long silences, during which I pictured sullen, sunken-cheeked militiamen prowling from bush to bush in that dark and watery swamp, to stalk fellow countrymen as they'd have stalked wild animals.

Toward sundown they came out again, hallooing and cursing, splashed with mud and scratched with brambles from head to foot. They had, they told Demott exultantly, killed one and taken three prisoners. The hunted Loyalists, they said, had run from them like water rats; but how many there were, or why the rest had escaped, they were unable to say.

Before that night was over we found out for ourselves.

Demott's Mill was located on a mill pond now covered by the Hempstead storage reservoir in Hempstead Lake State Park. Two other mills, known as Oliver's Mill and Nichols' Mill, were later located on other ponds established by permits granted by the Town Council of Hempstead. The Hempstead storage reservoir was designed to hold one billion gallons of water but due to the fact that excavation work was never completed, leaving an island in the northerly section, this capacity was reduced to 880 million gallons. It is, however, the second largest body of fresh water on Long Island. At the present time all of the water stored in the reservoir comes from springs. The flow from Horse Brook, which comes through the Village of Hempstead, is all by-passed around the settling basin in a 36-inch main to Mill River.

The water supply area at Valley Stream was also a wild and swampy area but much narrower and more accessible. Because of this it was the first of these streams to lose its original character by the encroachment of built-up areas. The Massapequa water shed also served the Loyalist cause. "From Demott's we bore off to the eastward, through the great plains to Massapequa, where other hundreds of Loyalists were congregated in the tortuous waterways that empty into Massapequa Creek," continues the story of Oliver Wiswell.

After the dedications of these water supply areas the Park Commission immediately started improvements for park and parkway purposes. At Valley Stream the City discontinued the use of the area for water supply purposes except in emergency. A bathhouse was constructed, the lake cleaned out and clean white sand imported. A system of perforated pipelines was laid in the lake bottom through which a solution of chlorine is pumped to keep the water pure during intensive usage. The purity of the water was further protected by the acquisition of additional lands along the streams several miles north of the lake. In clearing out the stream, automobile tires, bed springs, tin cans and all kinds of other discarded odds and ends were removed. Along the stream, foot paths were provided connecting the south area of the park with the north picnic area on the Southern State Parkway. From 1926 to 1948 the lake in the southerly portion of Valley Stream State Park was operated as a fresh water bathing area equipped with diving platforms and water slides. During this period park attendance was nearly 600,000 each year, making it one of the most intensively used park areas on Long Island.

When plans were first announced for the use of the Valley Stream Reservoir for swimming, local officials were somewhat alarmed over the prospects of bathers overrunning the village in bathing suits and committing nuisances. The lake soon became popular as a convenient swimming area for local residents and on December 29, 1927, the Village Board of Valley Stream unanimously adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that we express our great appreciation of the work done by the Long Island State Park Commission throughout Long Island, in the development of areas of great natural beauty, to which the population of the Empire State and our visitors may at all times profitably repair for recreation and rest, and

THAT WE especially and most heartily commend the vision of the Honorable Alfred E. Smith, Governor of New York State and his untiring application to the great responsibilities of such a splendid and beneficial measure, conducive to the better health and greater enjoyment of the citizens of this State, and

THAT WE thank the members of the Long Island State Park Commission, the Honorable Robert Moses, President of this body, and Mr. Arthur E. Howland, Chief Engineer, for their immediate development of the reservation owned by the State in this Village, and known as the Valley Stream State Park, and

THAT WE record this assurance to them of our appreciation and support, and

THAT IT IS our conviction that we speak for Valley Stream, and that the future years will unquestionably prove that all engaged in the work of providing these recreational areas have done wisely and well.



In recent years Valley Stream Lake became so heavily used that the bathing area was closed when the attendance reached 12,000 persons. Water conditions were constantly watched. The encroaching population of the area around the lake and streams feeding into it and extremely heavy usage have made it impossible to maintain satisfactory conditions. Starting with the 1948 season swimming was permanently discontinued and the lake used for boating, fishing and skating.

The dedication of the Long Island water supply areas was in the form of a permanent surface easement for state park and parkway purposes. The City of New York reserved the right to continue to pump water where and when needed for city water supply purposes and required that the used water areas be protected. The city continues to pay local taxes on these areas. The main lake, settling basin and ponds to the south in Hempstead Lake State Park are still used for city water supply purposes and cannot be used for active recreation. The surrounding upland in this 903 acre park is, however, extensively used. Hempstead Lake State Park contains four picnic areas, model yacht basin, five miles of bridle paths around the lake, seventeen tennis courts, five playgrounds, archery range, baseball field, softball field, and incidental game facilities such as paddle tennis and horseshoe-pitching courts. In the main picnic area is located the only mechanical amusement device to be found in any of the state parks on Long Island, a children's carousel which was a gift of August Heckscher.

The Southern State Parkway passes through the park in a loop around the south end of the lake across the reservoir dam and northerly along the easterly shore. The construction of a causeway was started in December, 1945, across the north end of the lake to furnish a direct and shorter parkway route and to eliminate dangerous curves on the original route across the dam. The new cutoff follows the route of old Eagle Avenue as it existed prior to 1874 when the area was cleaned out for the reservoir.

The stream areas along the Meadow Brook, east of Freeport and along Jackson's Creek at Wantagh have been developed for the Meadowbrook and Wantagh State Parkways. Massapequa State Park consisting of 595 acres is undeveloped except for a bridle path and lawn bowling green. Part of this area is also used for the right of way of the Southern State Parkway and Bethpage State Parkway.

#### ORIENT BEACH STATE PARK

As early as 1640 the settlers of the Town of Southold on the northerly fluke of eastern Long Island obtained grants of lands from the Corchaug Indians which were later confirmed by Royal Patent from the English Crown. In subsequent town meetings certain of these lands were allotted to the residents of various sections. One of these allotments of land, known as Long Beach at Orient Point, went to the inhabitants of the Parish of Oyster Ponds which is now the unincorporated Village of Orient. In 1774, the then residents of this district claiming to be all the owners of these lands entered into a

written agreement providing that Long Beach should be forever reserved for common use, protection and improvement according to the judgment of the majority of such local property owners. In 1807 a law was enacted by the State Legislature authorizing the male inhabitants of Orient, being taxpayers qualified to vote at town meetings, to elect trustees of their common lands. This law applied to Long Beach, a narrow peninsula of land connected to the mainland near Orient Point and running westerly into Gardiner's Bay. It consisted of 342 acres of land with 45,000 feet of bay frontage.

Since early days trustees were elected to supervise these lands but after about a hundred years the act of 1807 was completely lost sight of and no one at Orient knew of or questioned the basis or background of the trustees. This was understandable because Long Beach which was wild and inaccessible neither required nor received much attention from the trustees. For years they assumed that they were some sort of a chartered corporation and the business they did transact in granting fishing and shellfishing permits, etc., was done in the name of the Long Beach Corporation. About 1925, one of the trustees who was also a local Justice of the Peace became interested in the background and title of Long Beach and after failing to find a charter or certificate of incorporation on file in Albany or elsewhere, he discovered the Act of 1807. A meeting was called at which it was decided in accordance with the Act that all the male taxpayers of the Village of Orient would have a vote on matters concerning the property.

The management of Long Beach affairs was thereafter conducted by the residents in the name of the Long Beach Association but after considerable local discussion of the inability of the qualified residents, having no machinery or facilities of government, to develop and manage the property as a public park or to make other appropriate use of it, it was decided that the State should be asked to take over the area for park purposes under the jurisdiction of the Long Island State Park Commission.

The first step taken was the calling of a special meeting of the resident taxpayers who voted to turn over the property to the State for park purposes. Pursuant to this vote a deed was delivered to the Long Island State Park Commission in the summer of 1929. Because of the unusual circumstances surrounding the early title it was agreed that the State should also acquire the lands by appropriation proceedings in order to insure obtaining good title. This was done and Long Beach was officially designated as Orient Beach State Park on October 7, 1929. Thereafter a park entrance road and causeway were constructed from the main highway in order to make the park area accessible. The high water, wind and waves caused by the hurricane of September, 1938, destroyed a large portion of the causeway and required closing the park until the damage was repaired and the road reopened on July 1, 1939. The hurricane of September, 1944, again washed out this road. Sufficient funds were made available to rebuild it in 1947 on a higher elevation.

A small bathhouse, parking field, picnic area and refreshment stand have been provided at Orient Beach. The westerly portion of



the park has been reserved as a wild life sanctuary with a low grassy section frequented by thousands of terns. The remaining portion of the area, which is largely wooded with windblown and gnarled black-jack oaks and red cedars is one of the few osprey nesting places along the eastern coast. These eagle-like birds, the largest of the hawk family, build huge nests in the low trees and on the sands of Orient Beach State Park where they return to the same nests year after year.

#### JONES BEACH STATE PARK

Jones Beach State Park, the most famous of all State parks, derives its name from Major Thomas Jones who came to Long Island in 1692, became high Sheriff of Queens County, Ranger General of Nassau and owner of one of the largest tracts of land on the south shore. Major Jones had had a life of adventure before he married Freelove Townsend and settled down on the vast acreage around Massapequa given to his wife as a wedding gift from her father. He had been a loser in the Battle of the Boyne and the siege of Limerick but escaped to France where he obtained a ship and crew to prey on commerce as a privateer. This was considered a respectable international practice but not by the British when it affected their shipping and they soon bottled his ship up in the West Indies where it had to be abandoned. After marrying Freelove they built, near Massapequa, the first brick house on Long Island and eventually acquired a total of 6000 acres. Their house stood until 1837. Apparently they thought they also owned at least a part of what is now Jones Beach because around 1700 he established a whaling station on the outer beach near the site of the present park. Jones died in 1713 and on his tombstone are the following lines, probably written by himself:

From Distant Lande, to This Wild  
Waste He Came  
This Seat He Chose, and Here He  
Fixed His Name.  
Long May His Sons, This Peace  
Full Spot Injoy  
And No Ill Fate his Offspring Here  
Annoy.

No one knows how long the Jones whaling plant operated but for over two hundred years the outer beach, known as Jones Beach, including sections called Hemlock Beach, High Hill Beach, Short Beach and Gilgo Beach, remained virtually uninhabited and unused except by a few fishermen, summer cottage owners and squatters. These lands on the outer beach in Nassau County consisted of a low and narrow coastal barrier of sand and marsh about five miles from the mainland, which were owned by the Town of Hempstead and the Town of Oyster Bay by virtue of Royal Patents. Their inaccessibility even by small boats retarded any extensive usage. Seventy years ago there was an inlet through which boats passed from bay to ocean where the East Bathhouse now stands. By 1926, natural proc-

esses had brought about its closing. Today the gas station on the Wantagh Causeway is built near what was the south bank of a tidal creek. The Ocean Parkway east of the East Bathhouse is located directly over what was formerly a nine-foot-deep channel. Zach's Bay, which was named after Zachariah James of Seaford, was a maze of shoals and bars and required the excavation of six million cubic yards of sand in order to make it into the deep water boating and bathing bay of today. Birdsall Jackson of Wantagh, an author and authority on early Long Island, describes these conditions as follows:

In a sailboat with a fair wind, the trip to Jones Beach took about an hour, and with a head wind, three hours. If you were not familiar with the many shoals and crooked channels, you would not get there at all. An excursion to Jones Beach was always planned as a full day's outing and the day chosen so that the voyager went out with the ebb tide and came back with the flood. All night sojourns on the sand flats were not infrequent.

At a later period a few cottages were built at the High Hill section and weekend trips and vacation outings came into vogue with the motor boat era. But navigation was still hazardous and difficult. The late Judge Seaman, who had one of the first cottages there and made his trips across the bay with a motor boat, said that he spent more time out of his boat than in it and referred to his weekend journeys as his walks to the Beach.

This was the status of Jones Beach when in 1925 Commissioner Moses asked the Town of Hempstead for its interest in the outer beach together with a right of way across the bay for state park and parkway purposes. The Town Board of Hempstead agreed to submit the proposition to the voters but before election day of November, 1925, fantastic stories were prevalent throughout the Town about the tremendous value of the lands requested and about the Commission's intentions to create a second Coney Island without local benefit. Because of the opposition that developed which was guided mainly by wealthy estate owners who were opposed to the Commission's plan for the Northern State Parkway, the proposition was defeated at the polls.

The referendum did, however, arouse interest in the beach lands and it became evident that instead of simply criticizing the state plan a definite plan of local development and use would have to be made. When faced with this responsibility local officials sought the State's aid. A special commission was created, known as the Hempstead Development Commission consisting of the three Long Island State Park Commissioners and three representatives of the Town. A plan was agreed to whereby the Town was to convey an area somewhat smaller than originally requested together with a right of way for a causeway across the bay from Wantagh on condition that the State commence construction of the causeway and park facilities within a specified time. A second proposition containing these provisions



was submitted to the people and after an extensive program of education and speeches to explain the Commission's plans it was approved by vote of the people of the Town at the elections of November, 1926. G. Wilbur Doughty, Presiding Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead, who from the first had taken a farsighted view of the question, was largely responsible for the success of the proposition.

In December of 1926, the first engineering survey stake was driven in the sands of Jones Beach at the precise spot where the water tower now stands. Since that time over 40,000,000 cubic yards of sand have been pumped in the now developed area of Jones Beach State Park, on the causeways to the beach and along the 17 mile Ocean Parkway, and a total of approximately \$15,000,000 has been expended on park improvements and in making the park accessible. All this took, step by step, persuasion, hard work and far sighted leadership on the part of Commissioner Moses and his fellow Commissioners and was not accomplished without many difficulties. The Commission's plans seemed, to the average person and to most officials in Albany, to be so ambitious that failure was generally predicted and the possibility of the park's attracting a large attendance seemed very speculative. The initial appropriation of funds by the legislature for the East Bathhouse was only enough to build the foundations. Commissioner Moses stuck to his original plan and convinced Governor Smith of the need for high standards. Additional funds were made available but other difficulties developed. Labor strikes for a time stopped all work and the causeway contractor went broke. When he was unable to borrow enough funds to continue work, Mr. Moses persuaded his mother to advance \$20,000 so that his promise to local officials of completing the causeway and opening it to traffic would be fulfilled.

During this time the Town of Oyster Bay conveyed additional lands including the High Hill Section of Jones Beach and the right of way for the Ocean Parkway easterly to the Nassau- Suffolk line. This was done by vote of the Town residents on November 8, 1927. Later the Town of Babylon in Suffolk County conveyed additional beach lands to extend the parkway to Oak Island Beach in exchange for certain lands under water owned by the State.

Most of the land conveyed by the Town of Oyster Bay and a portion of the lands conveyed by Hempstead were in an area where title was in dispute. This brought on what became known as the Seaman Gore case which lasted for ten years and ended in the United States Supreme Court. The case involved the claim of title by the heirs of John Seaman who received a royal grant in 1666. The private interests in the case were opposed by the Towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead and before the State got into the suit the town allowed judgments to be entered against them. Commissioner Moses had the case reopened. Subsequent investigations disclosed instruments of title theretofore unknown and the action was tried all over again. This resulted in a decision holding that the State had good title and that John Seaman had relinquished all claim to the beach land when he applied for and received confirming patents in 1686 from the Governor General of New York.

Two other complicated lawsuits developed in connection with leases of areas within and adjacent to the Oyster Bay grant. One of these was the High Hill Beach area and the other involved the nearby area of 500 acres to the east which was leased and used by Solomon Guggenheim and a group of "sportsmen" for a shooting preserve. Both leaseholds were acquired by the Commission by eminent domain. In the High Hill area there were about 70 summer cottages occupied by sublessees. These were allowed to remain until the expiration of their leases and subsequently most of them moved their houses out of the park area to West Gilgo Beach. The base lessee, however, filed a claim against the State for a million dollars. The Court of



*Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt Laying Cornerstone of the West  
Bathhouse, Jones Beach*

Claims finally ended the case with an award of \$20,000. The Guggenheim case was more complicated because they were not fighting for damages but insisting on what they considered were their rights regardless of whether the shots they took at well-fed and almost tame ducks and geese hit their mark or a park visitor. They obtained an injunction to halt the park development. The courts on appeal decided in favor of the Commission and no claim was ever filed for the appropriation of a lease. Until 1935 the area which contained a fresh water pond was operated by the Commission as a game sanctuary. At that time the lease expired and because a proposition to cede it to the State had failed to pass, it has since been operated by the Town of Oyster Bay.

On August 4, 1929, Jones Beach State Park was opened to the public. On opening day with Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and former Governor Smith as principal speakers, a howling wind blew up causing a sandstorm that nearly disrupted the ceremonies. Raymond P. McNulty, Counsel for the Commission, has described the day in these words:



Sand fill blew over everything and everybody. It drifted across the roads to such an extent that they became dangerous for driving, it filled eyes and ears and noses; got into the carburetors of cars and stalled them; chipped the paint of mudguards and license plates and generally played such havoc, that the critics who said "it couldn't be done" had a grand holiday.

The subsequent completion of lawn areas and the planting of millions of clumps of beach grass prevented further sandstorms. The success and popularity of Jones Beach soon became apparent. In 1930, the first full year of operation, a million and a half persons visited the park. On July 2, 1931, the West Bathhouse with swimming and diving pools was opened. The Wantagh Causeway soon became overcrowded and serious traffic delays occurred every Sunday. On November 3, 1931, the Town of Hempstead by a referendum voted to convey to the State all of Short Beach, being the area between the park and Jones Inlet, together with a right of way for an additional causeway from the mainland near Freeport to the park. No state funds were available for the construction of the second causeway, known as the Meadowbrook Parkway, and because of the need of promoting public works to relieve unemployment, it was decided to create an Authority with power to raise the necessary moneys by the issuance of bonds to be repaid out of tolls collected on the two causeways. A special act was passed by the legislature creating the Jones Beach State Parkway Authority consisting of the Long Island State Park Commissioners. The sum of \$5,050,000 was borrowed by the Authority from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation on the basis of a self-liquidating loan to construct the new causeway with a loop to Long Beach; reconstruct the existing causeway and to enlarge parking fields. In order to pay interest, amortization and maintenance charges it was necessary to establish a twenty-five cent toll charge for a round trip on the old Wantagh Causeway as well as the new Meadowbrook. Although the parking charge at the park was reduced by the amount of the toll, the toll charge was opposed by a group of residents of Oyster Bay who started a series of lawsuits against the Commissioners. The toll charge was upheld by the courts and the new causeway was opened to traffic on October 27, 1934.

In 1937 over four million persons visited Jones Beach State Park. Swimming has always been the top attraction. Few places offer facilities for such fine surf bathing, still-water bay bathing and heated swimming, diving and wading pools. Thousands are also attracted by the other facilities for healthful recreation. There are handball courts, deck tennis and shuffleboard courts, roller skating rink, archery ranges, 18-hole pitch and putt golf course, softball diamonds, pedal boats, picnic areas, fishing dock and rowboats, outdoor dancing and wheel chairs on the mile-long boardwalk. In addition, special sports programs, calisthenics, concerts and other outdoor entertainments are presented. Jones Beach introduced outdoor operettas with "music over the water and under the stars"; it origi-



*Airview, Looking West, Jones Beach*



nated and held the first surfboard water polo contests; it established the first adult play area with man-size scooters, tricycles, wagons, etc. for the exclusive use of grown-ups and it held the first world's championship water skiing tournament.

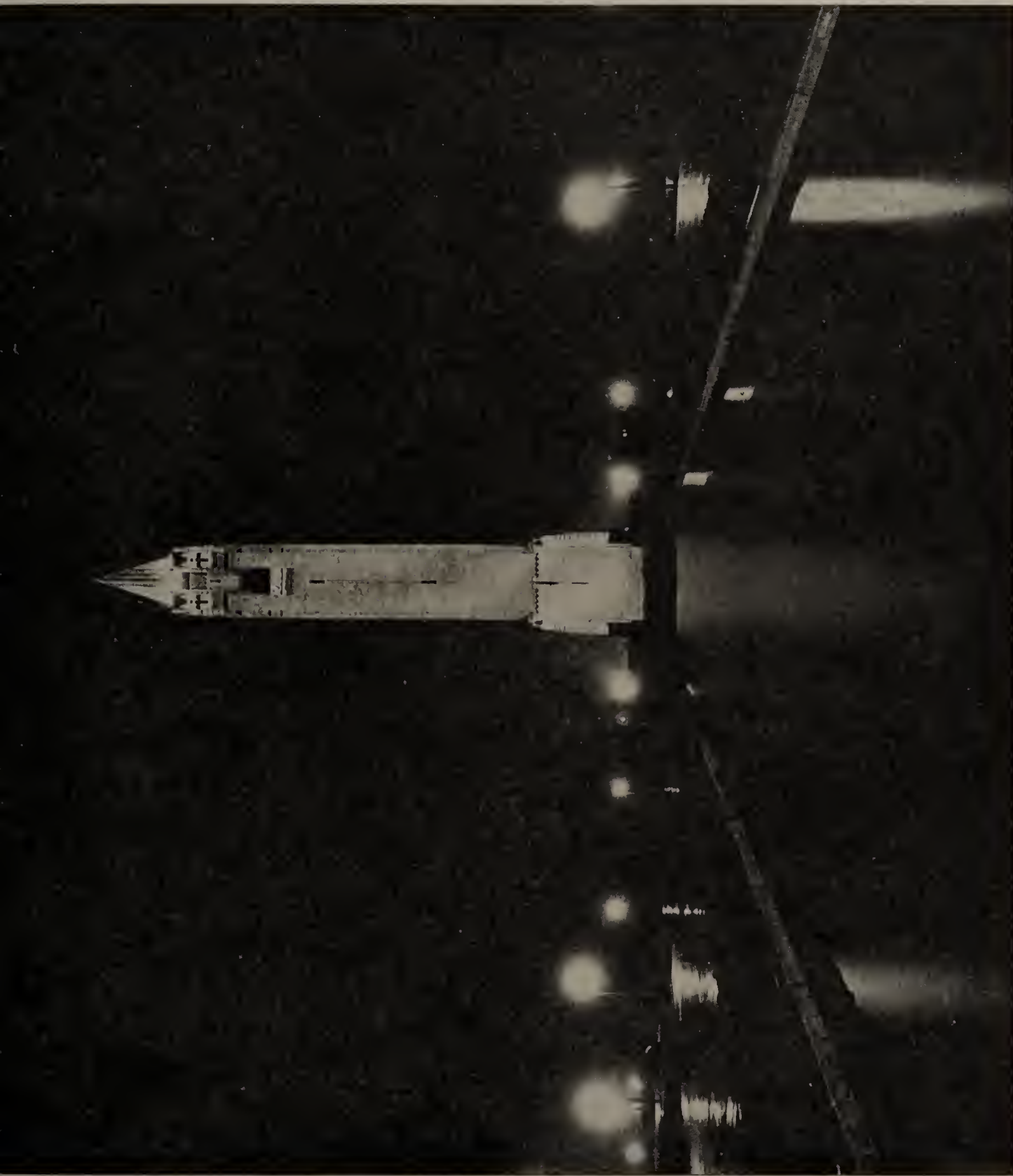
The park contains 2413 acres with six miles of ocean beach frontage and a half mile of bay frontage developed for still-water bathing. There are 14,980 lockers and dressing rooms in the two bathhouses, ten cafeteria and refreshment stands, two restaurants, three first aid rooms hospital-equipped and staffed by nurses, solariums for nude sun-bathing, diaper-changing rooms with booths and electric bottle warmers for mothers to care for their babies and kindergartens for the slightly older tots. The fresh water supply for showers and drinking comes from two wells each over 1000 feet deep and is stored in an architecturally attractive water tower holding 316,000 gallons and modeled on the Campanile of St. Mark's in Venice.

The concrete parking fields, of which there are seven, are 85 acres in total area and accommodate 15,000 cars at one time. During one week in the summer 64,000 hot dogs, 35,000 hamburgers and 150,000 servings of ice cream are sold at refreshment stands. At peak periods during the summer months there are 700 park employees at work within the park with an additional 500 persons employed in the restaurants and refreshment stands.

For a short time a few critics attacked the scale of prices established by the Commission to make the park as nearly self-supporting as possible. Actual studies of two million visitors has shown a per capita expenditure of nineteen cents spent for toll, parking and use of park facilities and twenty-one cents for foodstuffs. In answering these critics Commissioner Moses said in part:

We could, of course, have developed a plan which was less ambitious, with cheaper buildings and facilities of poor design and flimsy construction. By keeping down the number of employees and not insisting on the highest standards of order and cleanliness; by ignoring the need of future expansion, we could reduce our charges. We do not wish to be associated with this kind of an enterprise. Doubtless commissioners can be found to do this sort of thing. We do not believe it is what the metropolitan community wants. We promised the local people on Long Island who gave us their beach land that we would maintain certain standards and these are being maintained. When we first announced our program there was great skepticism expressed, especially by Nassau and Suffolk people, as to the kind of parks we would run, and there was a lot of unpleasant talk about litter and waste, and hordes of filthy people. We believe this fear has been dissipated, and that it has been shown that there are plenty of people who want the kind of parks we are trying to give them.

The park is not entirely self-supporting. The total revenues collected in normal times from the operation of the park, together



*The Famous Water Tower at Jones Beach State Park, Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean*



OCEAN FRONT OF  
WEST BATH HOUSE  
JONES BEACH STATE PARK



OCEAN BEACH—LOOKING EAST  
JONES BEACH STATE PARK



with the tolls collected on the causeways leading thereto, amount to approximately \$850,000 a year. This sum about equals the cost of maintenance and operation of the park but part of this revenue is used for interest and amortization of bonds which were issued to provide funds for causeway construction.

With gasoline and tire rationing, a ban on pleasure driving and other wartime restrictions, the attendance at Jones Beach dropped from 3,950,000 in 1941 to 615,500 in 1943. Most of these came by bus and for the first time bicyclists were permitted on the causeways. As traffic increased the following year bicycling proved too hazardous and had to be stopped. The drop in attendance and the shortage of help during the war made it necessary to curtail many of the usual park activities. Both restaurants were closed and the East Bathhouse was opened only on weekends when usage warranted. All park facilities including the use of lockers, games, etc., were free to service men and women. A total of 61,500 service personnel used these facilities during the year 1944. The large Marine Dining Room in the West Bathhouse was attractively furnished and turned over to the U. S. O. as an official lounge. For many of the servicemen who visited the park while stationed on Long Island, the first sight of home upon return from the war in Europe was the familiar Jones Beach water tower which is nearly 200 feet high and can be seen from vessels coming into New York while many miles at sea.

In the years following the war many improvements will be made at Jones Beach. A new marine stadium of steel and concrete will be built on Zach's Bay to replace the wooden structure erected with work relief forces, which became unsafe and had to be torn down. A new overlook parking field will be located in the High Hill Beach area near the East Bathhouse. The existing West Overlook will be enlarged and a refreshment stand and comfort station erected. The boardwalk will be extended. A new administration office, accessory shop and first-aid building will be constructed in the Central Mall area. The Short Beach boat basin will be completed. Bus stations and shelters will be erected, a complete new sewage disposal system will be installed and additional game areas and play facilities will be provided. When all postwar plans are carried out a total of over \$3,000,000 will be spent on improvements at Jones Beach. It will then be ready to provide healthful outdoor recreation to even larger numbers than visited this park before the war. Plans are also being made to provide additional means of access to Jones Beach by way of a \$6,000,000 bridge from the mainland near Brightwaters to Oak Beach at Captree Island where it will connect with the Ocean Parkway, 15 miles east of the park.

Major Thomas Jones could not have been more prophetic when 250 years ago he wrote in his epitaph "And Here He Fixed His Name" for Jones Beach State Park, already known from coast to coast and studied by planners from many foreign countries, has fixed the name of "Jones" to this area for all time. It was Robert Moses, however, and not Thomas Jones, who brought this about.







## BETHPAGE STATE PARK

Thomas Powell was an Englishman who didn't like "H's" and couldn't pronounce them anyway.

In 1695 he purchased from the Indian proprietors a large tract of land in the eastern part of what is now Nassau County and immediately sought an appropriate name for it. The lands were located on the road from Jericho, lying just to the north, to a place called Jerusalem, Long Island, on the south. This fact recalled to him the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem as related in the book of St. Matthew:

And as they departed from Jericho,  
a great multitude followed him,  
and when they drew nigh unto  
Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage,  
unto the Mount of Olives, then sent  
Jesus two disciples.

Thomas Powell knew that "Bethphage" meant "house of figs" but in a broader sense he reasoned that it could also mean "land of fruit or plenty". He thereupon decided to use the Biblical name of Bethphage to designate his new holdings situated as they were on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

A word with two H's, however, was too much for Thomas Powell. He always referred to the area as "Bethpage", a name that has survived on Long Island for nearly 250 years with very few people knowing of its origin. The first Quakers on Long Island used it as the name of their Friends Meeting House established near Thomas Powell's home and the deed from the Indians to Powell, which is recorded in the Queens County Clerk's office, has always been referred to by historians as the "Bethpage Purchase."

There is probably no other place or locality in the world that uses this unique name but it was not until after 1931 that it received any prominence or appeared on up-to-date maps of Long Island.

At that time the Long Island State Park Commission was seeking means of acquiring 1368 acres of land, partly in Nassau and partly in Suffolk County, lying north of the Village of Farmingdale and east of the Village of Central Park. These lands, which were part of the original Bethpage Purchase, were controlled by the heirs of Benjamin Yoakum, a Texas railway magnate who died in 1930. Jesse Merritt, Nassau County Historian and a direct descendant of Thomas Powell, suggested to Commissioner Moses that the land when acquired for park purposes be called "Bethpage State Park".

Commissioner Moses accepted the county historian's suggestion but the actual acquisition of the area for park purposes came about in as unusual a manner as did the establishing of its name in 1695.

The Yoakum tract was ideally situated for state park purposes. It was hilly, well wooded, had one complete 18 hole golf course, another partially completed, and other advantages nowhere else available for developing a complete recreation center for golf, tennis, polo, riding,



picnicking, baseball and in fact practically every form of recreation except swimming. The Yoakum heirs offered the property to the State for \$1,100,000 including improvements. This price of about \$850 an acre was considered reasonable but there were no funds available to the Commission to acquire the property or even to secure an option to hold it intact until funds could be raised.

With no possible means available to the State to acquire the property or to purchase an option to hold it, Commissioner Moses sought the aid of the local counties and towns which would be most



*The old Lenox Hills Golf Clubhouse*

Used as a caddy house and quarters for workers, until destroyed by fire on November 12, 1945. During the winter of 1942 this building was temporarily used to house men of the U. S. Army Air Corps.

benefited by the development of the area as a public park. A special act of the legislature was obtained authorizing counties and other local municipalities in Nassau and Suffolk County to purchase options in aid of the State park and parkway program. Pursuant to this authorization, the Town of Oyster Bay and the County of Suffolk agreed to contribute \$20,000 and \$10,000 respectively to secure an option to hold the property for a term of one year, ending on June 21, 1932.

The one golf course on the property was being operated as a private club under the name of "Lenox Hills Country Club" which held a lease from the owners. The Country Club started an action against the park commission, the County of Suffolk and the Town of Oyster Bay seeking an injunction to prevent the sale of the property for park purposes on the grounds that the proposed sale violated the terms of their lease. The Club's motion for an injunction was denied by the Nassau County Supreme Court on November 6, 1931. This cleared the way for the Park Commission to take over the operation of the golf course under a lease from the owners.

A special non-profit corporation called the Bethpage Corporation was formed to operate the clubhouse and golf course which were opened to the public in the spring of 1932. All moneys collected by the Corporation were used for maintenance and operation with all balances devoted to making improvements.

In the meantime ways and means of financing the purchase of the land were being studied. The help of numerous philanthropic organizations and foundations was solicited but because of the depression and other demands, no financial aid from these sources was available and it became necessary to extend the option for an additional year. This was done without cost and the Commission continued to operate the clubhouse and golf course throughout the year 1932. Large picnic areas were established and the riding stables, bridle paths and tennis courts were improved and opened for public use.

No means were found during the winter and spring of 1933 to purchase the property, so for the third time an option was given for an additional year. The "Park" became more and more popular with visitors and was now considered an important part of the Long Island state park system. No one seemed to realize how small the chances were that it would long remain in the park system.

During the summer of 1933 Governor Lehman called a special session of the legislature to consider legislation for relieving unemployment. Among the measures submitted to this special session by Commissioner Moses was a proposed act to establish a public benefit corporation to be known as the "Bethpage Park Authority", to consist of the members of the Long Island State Park Commission with powers to issue bonds for the acquisition, improvement and operation of Bethpage State Park. This act was passed by the Legislature and became Chapter 801 of the Laws of 1933 after the signature of the Governor was affixed on August 20, 1933.

Application was immediately made to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation requesting the purchase of Authority bonds on the basis of a self-liquidating project. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, at that time flooded with requests for loans, refused to consider the project because too large a part of the requested loan was needed for the acquisition of land in comparison with the amount for construction which would require the use of unemployed labor. It was indicated at Washington that construction funds would be available through the Civil Works Administration for a project of this kind if public ownership of the land could be obtained.

The owners of the property agreed to accept \$100,000 cash and \$900,000 in Park Authority bonds secured by a mortgage and revenues from the operation of the park. This total amount of cash and bonds was considerably less than the original option price. The State Comptroller purchased \$100,000 in bonds which made available the necessary cash and title was finally closed on May 18, 1934. It was remarked after the closing that "Mr. Moses had pulled another rabbit out of the hat" which pretty well summed up the thoughts of most of the officials concerned with the problem of acquiring the park for



nearly four years and who had come to believe that it would take a miracle to solve it.

Work on the construction of a new clubhouse, three additional golf courses, polo field and other improvements was progressed during 1934 and 1935 as a Work Relief Project. At the peak of this construction 1800 men were taken from the relief rolls and given employment. In addition an idle furniture factory was taken over and with work relief men all the furniture for the new clubhouse was made.



*Bethpage State Park's Newest Facility*

The Bethpage Stadium, opened May 3, 1942, showing inaugural game in which the Grumman Bombers defeated Barton's Night Hawks.

The clubhouse and three of the four 18-hole golf courses were opened to the public on August 10, 1935. The fourth golf course was opened the following spring. This building is an outstanding example of a 100% work relief project, properly planned and supervised. The golf courses were designed and constructed under the direction of Joseph H. Burbeck, the Superintendent of the park, with A. W. Tillinghast, internationally known golf architect, as consultant. The four courses are designated as the Blue Course, 6695 yards; the Red Course 6468 yards; the Green Course 6242 yards; and the Black Course 6783 yards. The Black Course, also known as the Championship Course, is the most difficult. All courses are hilly and tricky but all have their own distinctive features. It is a far from settled question which one is the easiest but even the "pros" agree that the Black Course is one of the toughest in the country. Among the prominent golf professionals who have played in exhibition matches at Bethpage are Gene Sarazen, Jimmy Hines, Lawson Little, Paul

Runyon, Sammy Snead, Horton Smith, Craig Wood, Jimmy Thompson, Willie Klein, Byron Nelson and Al Brosch, the Bethpage pro who started his golfing career as a caddy for B. F. Yoakum.

Bethpage State Park is an all-year-round park. At least one golf course is kept open for play all through the winter. When snow conditions and cold weather make golfing impossible, the park attracts thousands of winter sports enthusiasts to its hills for skiing and coasting. The only ski tow on Long Island is operated here.

In 1942 a new outdoor stadium was added to the recreation facilities at Bethpage State Park. This stadium, constructed in a natural valley just east of the parking field in front of the clubhouse, makes this park one of the most complete sports centers on Long Island.



*A Sunday afternoon polo game at Bethpage State Park*

One of the purposes of the stadium is to provide an athletic field near the clubhouse for the playing of softball and other games by outing groups, but in addition organized semi-professional baseball and football games are played here.

Even with a variety of sports facilities available in this park, it is expected that golf will always remain as the most prominent feature. In normal times more than 115,000 rounds of golf are played each year with single days sometimes reaching as high as 1300 players. Other sports rise and fall in public favor but golf, which was first played 400 years ago in Holland and for a long time considered only a wealthy man's game, is now firmly established as a popular form of recreation for all. Even the constant bombing of England during the war did not dampen enthusiasm for the game in that country as is evidenced by the following excerpt from a letter received from a former Bethpage golfer who was in London at the time:

I've seen no bomb craters that I've studied as anxiously as I have that bunker guarding number 2 of the Black Course. They do come bigger. When the ruins are cleared away plenty of them look more like the 3rd hole from tee to green. Day before yesterday I played golf—about my 10th game over here—and twice nicked the clubhead on jagged frag-



ments of anti-aircraft shells. It's to guard against these—averaging the size of your finger—that people are supposed to wear tin hats. My first games on this course were embellished by a couple of unexploded bombs sticking in fairways. Walking past these is sort of like edging past a vicious dog who doesn't know whether to bite you or let you go. It's permissible to lift out of a crater without penalty—but not nearer the hole. Most craters are small—not bigger than an upright piano on end.

From the revenues derived from the operation of the golf courses, tennis courts, riding stables, winter sports and other facilities, Bethpage State Park is entirely self-supporting.

Although Bethpage State Park is officially recognized as the newest of Long Island's twelve state parks, actual title to the area will not rest in the State of New York until all bonds have been retired. This status, however, is only technical and the name "Bethpage" which had almost been lost through the two and a half centuries since the time of Thomas Powell, has been revived and become well known because of Bethpage State Park.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### *Education in Nassau and Suffolk Counties*

EDMUND W. CASE

*Instructor, Freeport High School*

ON FEBRUARY 22, 1656, Governor Stuyvesant and the Commissioners of the New England Colonies agreed that "a line drawn from the westernmost part of Oyster Bay and thence in a direct course of the sea-shore shall be the line of division between the Dutch and the English on Long Island. . . ." This settlement brought the eastern portion of the island under the government of the colony of Connecticut. There a common school system had already been established, and since many of our schoolteachers came from there, the early educational ideas of Suffolk County were copied from those of the New Englanders. There has been discovered ample verification of the statement that the English discouraged, if they did not neglect, the diffusion of knowledge. They offered, therefore, only the barest essentials in the pioneer schools, being afraid, evidently, that the colonists might learn too much. Educated folk become imbued with ideas that lead to heresy, disobedience, and revolution; people are less difficult to control if they are kept in ignorance of politics, government, and history. They did believe in educating a few leaders to an understanding of the tenets of the state church, and enough of politics that they might learn to agree with the beliefs of the English aristocracy.

The Dutch, living on the western half of Long Island, took just the opposite view of learning. They realized that the youths of the present become the citizens of the future; the better educated they are today, the better equipped they will be tomorrow, for these individuals shape the destiny of community life and spirit. At the same time, long before the first course in psychology, the Dutch also believed that lawlessness and unhappiness were outgrowths of ignorance. For these two reasons, especially, then, the Dutch set up public schools in every community to train their children at the elementary level.

Suffolk County—"where government by the people originated"—is "the oldest county of purely English settlements within the limits of New York State". It was originally populated with families from New England who banded together to form independent colonies, each comprised of from eight to fifteen families. They were completely independent: took orders from no one, made their own laws, chose their own executives.

These were the determined-chinned pioneers who established the very first school on Long Island of which we have record. It was set up in Southampton in 1642, only two years after settlement. In 1657,



Huntington, according to its town records, got its first schoolmaster. In 1675, Hempstead established its first school.

Illiteracy ran high throughout these early precarious years. The letters and manuscripts of the 17th and 18th centuries give us a decided clue as to the quantity and quality of the people's education. It is obvious that no dictionaries were available in those days and



(Paul T. Wohlsen)

*Central High School, Valley Stream*

there was little agreement in pronunciation and spelling; no rules for punctuation and grammar were followed.

All education was superficial, spasmodic, and completely unorganized. School sessions were long or short, dependent on getting and keeping a schoolmaster. Daily hours were uncertain, dependent upon the seasons. Teachers would come and go. They taught little and were paid little. The enrollment was always small, and never constant, because of duties at home. In 1707, Hempstead had built a school with some enthusiasm, but "lett" it to a townsman for other uses in 1709 for lack of a schoolmaster.

At the outset, the establishment of schools did not mean, by any stretch of the imagination, that there were any school buildings. At first children had gotten together at a neighboring house to be taught by some learned member of the settlement. Later the church and the



clergyman became the forerunners of the school and the schoolmaster. The two interacted in more than one way. There was usually a meetinghouse of some kind that was used as a church and a school; the school teacher often found himself in the role of assistant to the clergyman, whose existence was even more nomadic than his own. Again, the earliest textbook was the Bible, from which the youngsters read and copied, and learned of God and the Ten Commandments.

Once the colonists had started the construction of school buildings, there still seemed little of which one might be proud. As late as 1838 schools consisted of one dingy, cold, uncomfortable room of drafty, wooden construction containing a few small windows. The room and walls were barren except for several crude desks of inclined tables, made of pine boards and fastened to the sides of the room, some board benches without backs in front of the desks, a teacher's desk (the only one with a drawer in it) and either a fireplace or a cast-iron box stove. The children furnished the wood for the fire. Sometimes there would be some smaller benches in the center of the room for the younger group. Nails along the wall behind the door, a broom in the corner, and a bucket of water along with a tin dipper on the floor completed the furnishings. Paint and plaster, of course, were unheard of.

Accredited by competence and piety, teachers were selected for their jobs by the governor or by the community fathers, and their individual agreements and contracts were included in the body of laws and regulations of the towns. The teacher was "to demean himself patiently and friendly towards the children in their instruction and be active and attentive to their improvement". He was paid in kind for the most part, the "kind" depending on the locality in which he taught. Certain specified amounts of butter, "merchantable wampum", clothing, grains, young cattle, pasturage, or (especially in eastern Suffolk County) whale oil, actually approximated a salary from five to seven dollars a month. In addition, the teacher was usually provided with room and "diet"; sometimes, a "suitable house". When dollars and cents were forthcoming, the money was raised by a tax placed on the inhabitants.

But school teachers are eternally busy, often at jobs other than the teaching assignment, making ends meet. Perhaps it was these pioneers of primitive days who set the precedent for ages to come, for at this time the teacher's duties other than his school work required general service and assistance to the clergyman, substituting for him in his absence, ringing the church bells, furnishing water for baptisms, giving out funeral invitations, and even digging graves upon occasion. Participation in these and other menial tasks lent nothing to his status as a professional man. In the summer, he worked in the fields where he could make more money, being replaced at the school's summer session by some young lady. With little respect from the community folk, the teacher could hardly hope to be highly regarded by his students. On the other hand, perhaps he, too, was at fault from time to time, for it has been recorded that now and then a teacher was not above sending students to a nearby tavern for beer





*High School, Patchogue*



with which to quench the former's thirst during his teaching hours; sometimes teachers were guilty of drunkenness on the job.

The school week was usually six days long, but on Saturdays children were dismissed by twelve or one o'clock. Hours for the remaining days varied considerably. Starting at eight o'clock in the morning, classes in the summer time would continue until five or six o'clock in the late afternoon; in winter, until they could no longer see. Lunch periods were one to two hours long. These rigorous schedules were not the fault of the teachers, but of tax-paying parents who wanted to be sure they were getting their money's worth.

The studies stressed were the four R's; readin', 'ritin', 'rithmetie, and, most important, religion. In the beginning, "the Bible, the bench, and the birch were most important". Instruction in common prayer and catechism was paramount. Supposedly, this curriculum helped these settlers to become "God-fearing, honest, moral, and reliable", if not educated. They did learn how to make good ink—early documents are still well preserved after two hundred and fifty years—and one grand accomplishment, how to write beautifully and legibly.

We find a few instances where some geography, a little ancient history, and brief outlines of English and Dutch history were presented to school pupils, but these were rare at first. It is not to be wondered at. People of those days, living on the doorstep of the New World, isolated from each other as well as from foreign lands, had the more immediate concerns of individual survival uppermost in their minds, and felt little the need to worry about social responsibility outside their own settlements. The world was much larger then; living was less complex; events outside one's own province mattered not at all. The problems of group living in a world community are only now being imperatively forced upon us. The days of American isolation, only one war ago, are still vivid in our memories. In those colonial days, American history had yet to be made before it could be written.

Gradually a few textbooks appeared under the arms of school children. There were Thomas Dilworth's Speller, Peter Parley's Geography, Lindsley Murray's Grammar. In 1818 Herman Daggett of Brookhaven published the *American Reader*. Around 1938, schools in Freeport used Daboll's Arithmetic, the Old English Reader, Hale's History of the United States, and Webster's Elementary Speller. A writing or copying book was an essential part of each student's equipment. One early writer, with a twinkle in his eye, observed that wood carving became an early art. This, of course, is still practiced to the present day.

*The Young Man's Best Companion* was the most useful textbook. Some three hundred and fifty pages long, it contained the whole curriculum: arithmetic, spelling, pronunciation, bookkeeping, history, and so on. The incorrect spellings of words were given as well as the correct spellings. It included advice on the proper methods of study, and the correct mental attitude for learning, as well as "philosophical sentiments in the art of living".



The slow progress of early education was due to a combination of many causes, but I doubt that it was as much from the dearth of books as from the poor teaching methods employed. These included rigid discipline, memorization (sometimes of a whole book), and a completely automatic learning process where there were no questions asked. There was no attempt to help the student understand the usefulness of studying or the correlation of subject matter.

In 1732 the legislature passed "an act to encourage a *Public School* in the City of New York for teaching Latin, Greek, and All



*Roslyn High School*

the parts of Mathematicks". The school was supported largely through funds derived from hawkers' and peddlers' licenses collected on a colony-wide basis. Under the act twenty free scholarships were provided to the surrounding cities and counties, including Suffolk and Queens (now Nassau), each of which was allowed to send one good student. This youth could not be under fourteen years of age; he must know well reading, writing, and English; he was to be selected by the "Justices at the General Sessions of the Peace".

The various steps that brought us our independence in 1783 awakened and aroused the spirited colonists to the need for more and better education. Now, it was realized, we must develop our own men for competent leadership of a still un-unified country; now, to preserve the newly-won freedom, every individual would have to take an active intelligent part in the shaping of its destiny. An understanding of various forms of government and different political systems, a knowledge of world history, and a fuller, more complete conception of our own small but important place in the sun, became immediately imperative. The rise of the academies was indicative of this new trend.



From 1784 on, as if seeds of learning had been broadcast over the whole of Long Island, new institutions of higher education sprang up, to be nurtured by people of means, and these flourished for the next hundred years; some until as late as 1907. Most of them became famous for their improved and diversified curricula, the scholarship of their fine instructors, and the guidance of capable administrators.

One of the very first of these was Clinton Academy which was founded in Easthampton in 1784 by Dr. Samuel Buell and General



*Great Neck High School*

William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Its charter was granted by the newly created Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1787. The school was named for George Clinton, at that time governor of New York State, and ever an indefatigable subscriber to the cause of public education. Clinton Academy was a large good-looking building, two and one-half stories high. Its two major departments were classics, and English and writing. William Payne, father of the author of *Home, Sweet Home*, was the school's first principal who also taught classes in English. It was he who maintained the high level of scholarship that brought fame to Clinton. Students from all over the country were in attendance from time to time, and the academy prospered for seventy-five years. It provided an invaluable influence on the moral and intellectual progress of eastern Long Island.

Huntington Academy was established in 1793. This was a private institution, not under state supervision, that catered largely to a local



clientele. Nevertheless, the curriculum was liberal and varied, and many students attended the school in preparation for college. It, too, had a profitable career until about 1857 when it was torn down.

There were many others, not all of which were in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, but taken together reflect the educational trends during the century following the Revolutionary War. The marked interest in secondary schools was here to stay.

Erasmus Hall in Brooklyn had been granted its charter in 1787; Oyster Bay Academy, another private institution, opened in 1802; Christ Church Academy was established in Manhasset in 1818.

Until about 1800, the education of girls was considered unnecessary beyond the very elementary level. Other feminine talents were to be cultivated in the home under the guidance of one's mother. The Quakers, however, believed that girls should have the same educational opportunities as the boys. In 1799, a boarding school for young ladies was opened by Mrs. Lyman Beecher, the mother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her home at East Hampton. In 1834, a Female Seminary was established in Riverhead. In a slightly different direction, and in an effort to further "elevate the scale of life", the state government in 1831 directed the Superintendent of Common Schools to pay out \$80 per year to support a school among the "Shinecoc" Indians for the instruction of their children.

A high point in this period of educational development was reached with the founding of Hempstead Institute in 1857. The institution, only twenty miles from New York, and "accessible several times daily by railroad", cost \$12,000 to erect. Furnished with modern furniture and equipment, it afforded a pleasant home for its students, probably both boys and girls. Reverend J. Walker Macbeth was its principal and guiding light. It had a primary department, and functioned two terms of twenty-two weeks each per year. Not only was it a good school by its own admission, and because of its praiseworthy external features, but more so because of a fine faculty and an excellent, liberal, progressive curriculum. The latter included a study of Christianity on a non-sectarian basis, commercial, classical, and mathematical courses, study of four foreign languages: French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and an emphasis on music, drawing, and painting. I do not know of a single high school in Nassau or Suffolk Counties to this day that presents a study of Italian.

It seems paradoxical that while this progress was being made in higher learning, the common schools still continued, for some fifty years after the Revolution, to function changelessly in their original, primitive fashion. A detailed report of memories of school days in old Raynortown (now Freeport) as late as 1838 shows the little progress that had been made. Throughout this period the academies flourished on private endowments and they catered only to a relatively select few who could afford to study. The elementary school, however, struggled along on poor taxpayers' money, and their perpetual grumbling about "progressive" education and the additional expense of new texts and new courses beyond the four R's already discussed kept innovations to a minimum.

Nevertheless, by 1840, certain new subjects and improved techniques were evolving. Blackboards were introduced about this time; some grammar, geography, natural philosophy, and advanced mathe-



(Courtesy of H. T. Weeks)

*The John Jermain Memorial Library, Sag Harbor*

matics wormed their way into the course of study. Teachers' salaries were steadily increasing; men teachers were making from \$12 to \$30 per month.

Moreover, in the early 1800s, the towns had divided into school districts, and a similar division and the numbering system used then, with occasional changes to meet growth demands, have persisted through the years. This gave a semblance of system and organization



to the whole and helped to facilitate control, even though the men who held the power were laymen who knew little of the job. In 1787, a law had been enacted incorporating the Regents of the University of New York State. Through the repeated efforts of several of the early governors of the state, to whose practical vision and determination we owe much, the first common school system was adopted in 1812. Before this, in 1795, an appropriation of \$50,000 annually for a five-year period was set up for the encouragement of schools.



(Photo by Hal B. Fullerton)

*St. Paul's School, Garden City, 1899*

In Suffolk County, a Teachers' Association of the Town of Islip took form in 1830, to become our first organized group of school teachers. Members met semi-monthly and operated successfully as a society for several years. Another similar organization, started in Huntington in 1842, was supervised by the Hon. Samuel A. Smith, and had ten or twelve years of profitable existence. Still another of these, the Suffolk County Teachers' Association, originated in Riverhead in 1852. All these organizations existed for the purpose of exchanging ideas and stimulating progress and interest in popular education, as well as to build a certain prestige for teachers as a professional group.

From the writings of Nathaniel R. Howell, one significant fact sums up this whole period of educational advancement. He has shown that "the cost [of instruction] of the pupil per year in 1835 averaged about \$1.50, while in 1872 it was \$7.00 per pupil."



Slowly the strength of this surging tide was to rise to ever increasing heights in the next hundred years. Our progress in education, even today far from ideal, has been, like the proverbial snowball rolling down a slow incline, a continuously accumulative project—going ever forward.



*Chaminade High School, Mineola*

In quick review, then, it should be remembered that before 1845 there were no free public schools as we know them today; no teaching profession as such. Administration and supervision were carried on as part-time activities by farmers, lawyers, businessmen, ministers—laymen who knew little about the learning situation, *in toto*. Teaching was a poorly paid part-time job for men and women. Pensions and tenure were unheard of.

During these last hundred years, that Dr. John W. Dodd of Freeport has chosen to call “a century of progress in New York State”, educational advancement has truly been wearing its seven



league boots. With gigantic strides across this whole period, we may take note of several significant achievements.

In 1845, the New York State Teachers' Association was founded, dedicated to the purpose of service: to the public, to the teaching profession, and to the youth of New York State. Step by step since that time we have attained free compulsory education at the elementary and secondary levels; substantial financial support of education by the state; professional state school administration; the unification of the public school system; the creation of a state department of education; the establishment of professional standards of teacher preparation, certification, and supervision; the guarantee of minimum salaries through state legislation; the establishment of the State Teachers' Retirement System; tenure and its extension to an ever larger number of teachers.

New York was the first state in the Union to levy a general tax for schools, to establish state supervision of elementary schools, to provide for the education of teachers, to provide district libraries, to organize a local association of school teachers, to have a state teachers' convention, and to publish a journal of educational progress, interests, and activities.

Particularly did the New York State Teachers' Association fight for free schools for all, to be supported by public and general expense. By 1849 some free schools had been established throughout the state. Those on Long Island were located in Brooklyn and Flushing.

The New York State school system is one of the very best in the whole United States. It exists today as a great monument to the governors, the legislators, and the many leaders of educational achievements throughout the state.

Obviously, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, along with other counties in the state, have benefited by this progressiveness. For this reason, as well as the mushrooming growth of Nassau and Suffolk in the last thirty years, educational institutions have increased qualitatively and quantitatively in size, number, and variety. Excellent schools of nursing, aviation, music, military science, and agriculture dot the whole island, in addition to the innumerable elementary and secondary schools of every community. The newest of these better schools is the Merchant Marine Academy established at Kings Point just four years ago.

The very peak of our present-day educational achievement is found in the two liberal arts colleges in Nassau County and a state school of agriculture at Farmingdale, just across the border in Suffolk County.

The idea of a Long Island agricultural school which had simmered for some time in the minds of many people, rural and otherwise, finally materialized in 1916 on a site on the Nassau-Suffolk boundary line in Farmingdale.

Originally called the New York State School of Agriculture, the institution was to prepare students for agricultural occupations of their choosing and to advise farmers and people in related enterprises with regard to the solving of their problems. Mr. Albert A.



*Public Library, Babylon*



*Public Library, Port Washington*



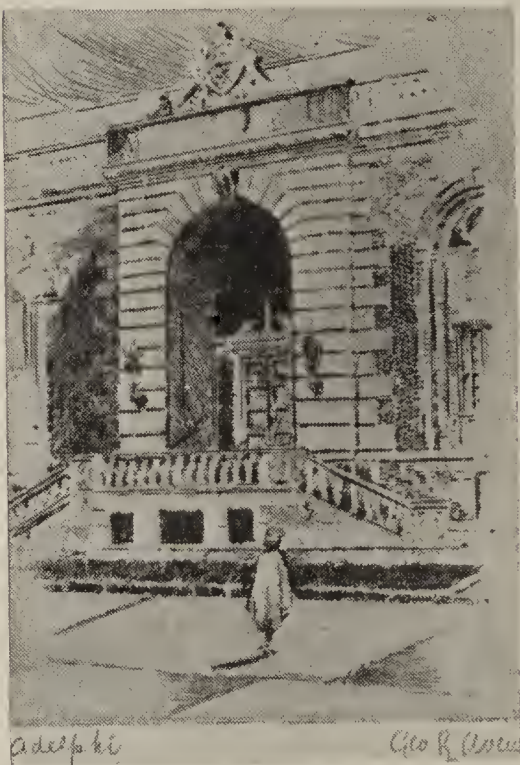
Johnson, the first director of the Institute, was responsible for much of its successful early planning and development. Extension service activities were under way even before students were admitted. Though buildings were not completed, the school accepted its first group of students, about sixty in number, in March, 1916.

In 1923 the school was brought under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education. In the same year, Mr. Johnson resigned the directorship, and Mr. Halsey B.

Knapp, who had previously organized and developed the New York School of Agriculture at Cobleskill, replaced him.

Increasing public endorsement and more or less constant expansion in kind and amounts of service have characterized Mr. Knapp's administration to the present day. The original physical plant has been enlarged to include a large dormitory, several classroom and laboratory buildings, as well as barns and greenhouses. A 740-acre farm was acquired in the Hudson Valley, near Beacon, New York, in 1942. In accordance with the Institute's philosophy of "learning by doing", large-scale farming operations are conducted there as part of the students' training.

Areas of specialized study at the Institute include animal husbandry, vegetable production, dairying, rural engineering, floriculture, nursery, and landscaping. The establishment of the Industrial-Technical Division in 1946 changed the school's name to the Long



(From an etching by George R. Avery)

*Entrance to Adelphi College,  
Garden City*

Island Agricultural and Technical Institute, and added to the curriculum courses in building construction, aircraft maintenance and operation, radio, electronics, refrigeration and air-conditioning, mechanical design, and dental hygiene.

In addition to this instructional program for students, a larger clientele—the rural people of the Hudson Valley and Long Island—have been served through regular extension work and evening courses presented by the school.

In January, 1947, 679 students were enrolled of which 513 were war veterans. When the present plans for expansion are brought to completion, the Institute will be equipped to care for at least fifteen hundred students.

Adelphi College celebrated its fiftieth birthday only last year. Originally founded in Brooklyn in 1896, in response to the need for such a college, its work and activities progressed successfully under the careful guidance of its distinguished first president, Dr. Charles H. Levermore, and a fine faculty.

From the first, ideals of sound scholarship and broad humanitarianism have been a paramount characteristic of the institution. Liberalism became an integral part of the school's tradition under the temporary administration of the Reverend S. Parkes Cadman, beloved clergyman, noted author, and forum leader, who was appointed Acting President in 1912.



*Aerial View of Hofstra College*

After the successful completion of a million-dollar campaign started in 1924-25, the college moved to a sixty-eight acre campus in the suburban, residential section of Garden City, Long Island, in order that expansion might be uninterrupted and more adequate housing facilities provided for students in pleasurable country surroundings.

Since 1937 the school's activities have been directed by President Paul Dawson Eddy, who is extremely popular with both students and faculty. Under his far-sighted leadership the college has grown rapidly both educationally and materially. Home Economics and Nursing Departments have been added. The liberal arts and professional curricula have been brought closer together. The Division of



the Arts has been greatly enriched and now includes the services of internationally known artists.

Although founded on a co-educational basis, Adelphi abandoned this policy in 1915 to become exclusively a woman's college. Only in the fall of 1946, with the nation-wide problem of finding sufficient school room to care for the collective educational needs of returning service men plus the normal percentage of incoming, recently graduated high school students, has Adelphi once more returned to its original co-educational plan. Approximately 850 male veterans were admitted at this time to bring registration up to 1900 students from all parts of the world.

Hofstra College (originally Nassau College, Hofstra Memorial of New York University) was founded in 1935 by the executors of the estate of the late William S. Hofstra, a lumber merchant of Dutch parentage, who lived in Hempstead. The school started under the academic supervision of New York University, but terminated its contract with the latter in July, 1939, and was granted an Absolute Charter, authorizing the conferment of baccalaureate degrees, by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, in February, 1940.

Hofstra is a non-sectarian liberal arts college devoted primarily to the educational needs of the young men and women of Long Island. Besides the liberal arts program, it provides all the indispensable courses leading to the study of medicine, dentistry, law, education, and other professional subjects. It offers, also, extensive programs in the major subjects of business administration.

The college is located about one mile east of the center of the town of Hempstead on a small but beautiful campus of twenty-six acres. At the present time, adjoining property is being added to this original plot of ground to make room for Hofstra's ever increasing enrollment and diversified academic activities—at the moment, swollen, as in all other educational institutions, to the breaking point.

Hofstra College is in its twelfth year of life. Those twelve years have been unique. The earth-shaking events of that period changed a rapidly changing world even more rapidly. Hofstra was able to meet these situations with the flexible adaptability of a youthful institution. Originally conceived in a great depression, the school was successfully encouraged through those precarious years of infancy by its first president, Dr. Truesdale Peck Calkins, only to find itself faced with World War II. Today, in a new era dedicated to the revival of peace and prosperity, Hofstra College embarks on its adult career with every reason for healthful survival and continued success under the guiding genius of its youthful new head, Dr. John Cranford Adams, an astute administration, and a select faculty.

Nassau and Suffolk Counties have kept in step with the leaders in the educational field. Both counties benefit from the progressiveness of New York State, the proximity of New York City. Both are aware of their innumerable shortcomings as well as the ideals for which they strive. Both are awake and active toward the ever increasing necessity for more and better schools. So long as these conditions prevail, we may face the future hopefully.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### *Long Island Census of 1781*

OSCAR G. DARLINGTON

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THE YOUNGS PAPERS in the archives of the Nassau County Historical and Genealogical Society contain three census lists for the area around Oyster Bay and Jericho, all that remain of an island-wide detailed survey of population and economic resources conducted by the British Army during February, 1781. Also included in these papers is the original *Order Book* of Captain Daniel Youngs of the Queens County Militia, which supplements the census lists and sheds new light upon the unhappy history of Long Island during the American Revolution.

Prior to the British Army survey, eleven census surveys are recorded for Long Island taken in the years 1698, 1703, 1723, 1731, 1737, 1746, 1749, 1756, 1771 and 1776. Most of these were island-wide, but none was as detailed as the Youngs census lists of 1781. In its careful tabulation of every farm animal, woodland and acre of cultivated land as well as the usual population figures, the census of 1781 resembles the famous Domesday survey of early English history. The earlier census figures for Queens (which included Nassau until 1898) and Suffolk Counties are listed below, together with the returns from the complete island (Kings, Queens and Suffolk Counties) in the United States census of 1790, for purposes of comparison and to make the information contained in the 1781 census significant. These charts have been compiled for the present study from the individual census reports as printed in O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, 1857), Volume I, pages 473 and 474, and Greene and Harrington, *American Population Before the Census of 1790* (New York, 1936), pages 92 to 95.

Immediately after the Revolutionary War in 1783, the Continental Congress ordered that the several colonies take a census giving very complete information. It was to record, besides the number of inhabitants of each county, those "killed and captivated in the war", and "those who joined the enemy." It asked for a complete return concerning buildings and their estimated value, under the following headings: Occupants' names; dwelling houses: brick, stone, frame, log; barns and other outhouses; mills: grist, saw, fulling, powder, paper or oil; distilleries; furnaces; forges; value of the buildings; acres of land, both improved and unimproved; value of the land. This would have been a most significant census had it been completed at that time.



QUEENS COUNTY  
WHITE

Census of	MEN					WOMEN			CHILDREN							Total
	Males over 10	Males over 16	Males 16-60	Males over 60	Men	Women	Females over 10	Females over 16	Chil- dren	Male Chil- dren	Males under 10	Males under 16	Female Chil- dren	Females under 10	Females under 16	
1698					1,465	1,350			551							3,366
1703			952			753				1,093			1,170			3,968
1723					1,568	1,599				1,530			1,371			6,068
1731	2,239						2,175				1,178			1,139		6,731
1737	2,407						2,290				1,935			1,656		8,688
1746			1,826	233				1,914				1,946			2,077	7,996
1749			1,508	151				1,778				1,630			1,550	6,617
1756			2,147	253				2,365				1,960			1,892	8,617
1771			2,083	950				2,332				1,253			2,126	8,744
1781																
1790		3,554				6,480						2,863				12,897

QUEENS COUNTY  
BLACK

Census of	Males over 10	Free	Males 16-60	Males over 60	Men	Women	Females over 10	Females over 16	Slaves	Male Chil- dren	Males under 10	Males under 16	Female Chil- dren	Females under 10	Females under 16	Total Negroes
1698																199
1703					117	114				98			95			424
1723					393	294				228			208			1,123
1731	476						363				226			199		1,264
1737	460						370				254			227		1,311
1746				61				361				365			391	1,644
1749			466	43				349				300			245	1,326
1756			563	55				470				581			500	2,169
1771			511	271				534				374			546	2,236
1781																
1790		808							2,309							3,117



SUFFOLK COUNTY  
WHITE

Census of	MEN					WOMEN			CHILDREN							Total
	Males over 10	Males over 16	Males 16-60	Males over 60	Men	Women	Females over 10	Females over 16	Chil- dren	Male Chil- dren	Males under 10	Males under 16	Female Chil- dren	Females under 10	Females under 16	
1698					973	1,024			124							2,121
1703			787			756				818			797			3,158
1723					1,441	1,348				1,321			1,156			5,266
1731	2,144						1,130				2,845			955		7,074
1737	2,297						2,353				1,175			1,008		6,833
1746			1,835	226				2,016				1,887			1,891	7,855
1749			1,863	248				1,969				2,058			1,960	8,098
1756			2,141	221				2,335				2,283			2,265	9,245
1771			2,834	347				3,103				2,731			2,658	11,673
1781																
1790		3,756				7,187						3,273				14,216

SUFFOLK COUNTY  
BLACK

Census of	Males over 10	Free	Males 16-60	Males over 60	Men	Women	Females over 10	Females over 16	Slaves	Male Chil- dren	Males under 10	Males under 16	Female Chil- dren	Females under 10	Females under 16	Total Negroes
1698																558
1703					60	52				38			38			188
1723					357	367				197			54			975
1731	239						83				196			83		601
1737	393						307				203			187		1,090
1746			393	52				310				329			315	1,399
1749			355	41				293				305			292	1,286
1756			297	40				236				278			194	1,045
1771			389	59				334				350			320	1,452
1781																
1790		1,126							1,098							2,224



## U. S. CENSUS OF 1790 AS IT APPLIES TO LONG ISLAND

County	Town	Free White over 16	Free White Males under 16	Free White Females	All Other Free Persons	Slaves	Aggre- gate Total	More Females than Males	More Males than Females
KINGS COUNTY	Brooklyn.....	362	257	565	14	405	1,603		54
	Flatbush.....	160	153	238	12	378	941		75
	New Utrecht...	98	81	167	10	206	562		12
	Gravesend.....	88	69	129	5	135	426		28
	Flatlands.....	72	71	143		137	423		
	Bushwick.....	123	69	172	5	171	540		20
	Total.....	903	700	1,414	46	1,432	4,494		189
QUEENS COUNTY	Newtown.....	420	353	753	52	533	2,111		20
	Jamaica.....	397	294	697	65	222	1,675	6	
	Flushing.....	325	229	590	123	340	1,607	36	
	N. Hempstead..	550	442	1,026	171	507	2,696	34	
	Oyster Bay....	949	756	1,709	302	381	4,097	4	
	S. Hempstead..	913	789	1,705	95	326	3,828	3	
	Total.....	3,554	2,863	6,480	808	2,309	16,014	83	20
SUFFOLK COUNTY	Huntington....	763	742	1,468	74	213	3,260		37
	Islip.....	132	126	248	68	35	609		10
	Smith Town...	695	179	369	113	166	1,022		5
	Brookhaven....	727	617	1,372	275	233	3,224	28	
	Shelter Island..	39	38	77	23	24	201		
	Smithhold.....	765	646	1,436	190	182	3,219	25	
	S. Hampton....	781	653	1,544	284	146	3,408	110	
	E. Hampton...	354	272	673	99	99	1,497	47	
	Total.....	3,756	3,273	7,187	1,126	1,098	16,440	210	52
GRAND TOTALS.....		8,213	6,836	15,081	1,970	4,839	36,948		

Compiled from *Return of the Whole Number of Persons within the Several Districts of the United States* (1st Census, 1790), published in New York, 1791.

In passing, several important trends are worth noting from these statistics. They indicate the slow growth of population in the last century of the colonial era. In the three-year period from 1746 to 1749, the population actually decreased by almost 15%. From 1756 to 1771, a sharp decline is noticeable in the number of children and a sharp increase in the number of old men. In 1698, the population

of Queens County was larger by 33% than that of Suffolk, despite the fact that Suffolk was founded earlier. In 1723, Suffolk forged ahead, to lose its lead again in the 1737 census. In 1749, Suffolk was leading, this time to hold its position throughout the remainder of the colonial era. In 1790, Suffolk led in population, with Queens County a close second and Kings County running a very poor third with less than five thousand persons, one-fourth the population of Queens County.

During the Revolution the largest population on the Island was centered in what at present constitutes Nassau County. In the census of 1790, the largest town anywhere on Long Island was Oyster Bay. These facts give added significance to the Youngs census lists, which reveal details of the most important population and farming area on Long Island at the time.

The specific purpose of the Army census of 1781, was to determine exactly the resources of each homestead, so as to place upon a scientific and equitable basis the requisition of materials essential for the maintenance of the British Army in New York.

It took the British five years of blundering on Long Island to evolve this policy of requisition based upon a careful census. At first, after the Battle of Long Island, in 1776, which placed the island in the role of an "occupied country" until the end of the war and withdrawal of the troops in 1782, there was no law but the will or the whim of the soldiery, consisting of British regulars, the Queens County Militia composed of native loyalists, and the Hessians so dreaded by the populace. Long Island was regarded by the British as a convenient source of supplies not only for the army itself but also for the occupied city of New York. These supplies consisted largely of cordwood, grain, foodstuffs, lumber, horses and wagons. The inhabitants were scared into cutting and carting wood, into thrashing and delivering grain, into giving up horses and carts; but it soon turned into a game as to how little the inhabitants could give and how much foraging parties of the conquerors could get.

During the first three years of the occupation there were numerous instances of assault and high-handed methods of the soldiery, committed against Whigs (patriots) and Tories (loyalists) indiscriminately. The Hessians, encamped around Jericho, Westbury and Cedar Swamp, stripped boards from houses and entered premises for whatever they wanted when building and furnishing barracks. There was little semblance of justice or order. A Hessian officer in answering a group of insulted citizens, lightly replied that his men were "such a pack of thieves you can keep nothing from them". A farmer, upon hearing a noise in his barnyard late at night shot at random into the dark and wounded a Hessian making off with a cow, and was good-humoredly told by the commanding officer that he would have given the farmer a guinea had he been lucky enough to kill the culprit. Captain Daniel Youngs himself, a loyal officer in His Majesty's service, had great difficulty in preventing the Hessian soldiers stationed at Oyster Bay from stealing juice from his cider press. Henry Onderdonk, to whom modern historians of Long Island owe an immeasurable debt for his collection of historical material in his



justly famous *Revolutionary Incidents*, lists many other instances of wanton robbery, murder and seizure of movable property from both homesteads and grocery stores.

The irregular impressment of teams was also frequent and extremely annoying to a people who depended entirely upon their own teams for transportation on land. "No matter how urgent, whether plowing, going to the mill, on a visit, at church, or at a funeral, the team must go. I. R. had a black boy and team impressed,



(Photo Courtesy of F. Kull)

*Seaman House, Plain Edge*

on the road, to carry baggage to Easthampton, and knew not what had become of them until the boy returned with his feet frozen. I. R. was himself met in his wagon and pressed, but he resolutely refused to go, though a bayonet was put to his breast. They took his team, however, which he gave up for lost. . . . One season the Hempstead troop took off nine loads of his hay, and those from Jericho the rest."

Soon after the British occupation a forage office was set up in New York, and foragers acting for the army would give certificates to Tory civilians, redeemable at the forage office at proclamation prices. However, it was very inconvenient, and usually not advisable, to go to New York at that time.

Whigs, or rebels, had no legal standing whatever. A British proclamation of November 15, 1777, stated that "persons in want of salt to cure necessary provisions for their family use this ensuing

winter, must produce a certificate of a justice of the peace next their place of residence that they are proper persons to be trusted." This was a most effective way to exert pressure upon rebels, for salt was a necessity to the farmers. Three bushels of salt were rationed to each family, regardless of numbers. The census of 1781 was not yet taken which showed some families to have five adults and seven children, and others to have but two adults. The average size of families for the United States in 1790 was 5.7 persons. On September 5, 1778, Governor Tryon made a trip on Long Island to eliminate sympathizers with the Revolutionists. He wrote to his superior, Lord George Germain:

I arrived last evening from the East End of the Island, with a Detachment of near one Thousand provincials, where I had marched to secure the peaceable behavior of the disaffected inhabitants in that quarter, and assist the Commissary in obtaining about one thousand fat cattle for the Army. Enclosed is the oath I administered to all the Inhabitants, on the North side of the Island, giving them the alternative whether to take the oath or remove with their families and furniture to Connecticut; not one of the whole chose the latter, even the hottest Rebels said my proposal was generous, and took the oath, which convinces me that the acrimony of opposition is much softened by the late concessions of Government.

A month later, however, Governor Tryon felt it necessary to repeat his visit, for he wrote to the same Lord on October 8, 1778, "Having in a second excursion brought all the Inhabitants on the East end of Long Island as far as Montauk Point, under an oath of peaceable behavior to His Majesty's Government (and with good humor), I acquainted Sir Henry Clinton therewith. \* \* \*"

The British soon discovered, however, that a simple oath of loyalty to His Majesty's Government was not sufficient. The haphazard, unregulated practice of seizure failed to provide enough food and material. Thus throughout 1777 and 1778, the British began to evolve a more systematic policy for requisitions and set up machinery to carry it into effect. The Long Island farmers were winning in the game with the foragers, as seen by a British proclamation of December 27, 1777:

Whereas the farmers of Long Island are possessed of great quantities of wheat, rye and Indian corn, and it is highly unreasonable that those who stand in need of the same should be left at the mercy of the farmer; the price of wheat is fixed at 12s per bushel of 58 pounds. . . . Farmers are ordered to make a return to the commanding officer of the militia of the county of the quantity they have, and how much they want for family use.



At the same time, "farmers are ordered to thrash out immediately one-third of their present crop of wheat and rye; and one-third by February next; the residue by May 1. Whoever disobeys will be imprisoned and his crops confiscated."

These orders, harsh enough in themselves, yet permitted inhabitants to make their own estimate of their crops and of the amounts needed for family consumption during the winter.

Still the farmers held back. Captain Youngs' *Order Book* contains revealing entries as to how desperate the British forces were in their lack of provisions, horses and wagons. On September 20, 1780, the British were still trying to get the farmers to provide grain. On that date Colonel Hamilton ordered all inhabitants of Queens County "to thrash out their oats as fast as possible and bring them to the commissary at Jamaica or Flushing by the 25th. . . . If this order is not complied with they must blame themselves if a foraging party is sent among them."

The 25th arrived, and apparently no oats came in, for three days later, on September 28, Colonel Hamilton gave the order that "the forage be immediately carried into execution and completed by the 20th of October." Furthermore, he summoned the major and all the captains of the Queens County Militia to assemble in Jamaica on October 2 to meet an officer of the Quartermaster General's Department, in order that the forage be thoroughly conducted.

These efforts were apparently not effectual. The Long Island farmer continued to thwart the occupying army by the methods universally adopted by civilian farmers against hostile powers in their midst. Thus as a last extremity, Governor Robertson established an Office of Police, a sort of Gestapo for Long Island, in the bitter cold days of January, 1781, at the time when Governor Robertson wrote from New York, ". . . two feet of snow on the ground. . . . I am just returned and hardly able to write." Its primary task was to make or cause to be made a census of all inhabitants and their property, in order that a system might be established which the canny farmers could not circumvent. The three following orders taken from Captain Youngs' *Order Book* form the basis for the census reports:

Office of Police Jamaicai 31 January 1781

His excellency Leut. General Robertson has Directed us to prouve a regular return of the Number of Inhabitants on the Island Consisting with the Men Women & Children of the Horses Stock Carts and Waggon and the Hay and grain thereon.

You will therefore make a return at this office of your Beat Conformable to the above Order on the 1st of March.

GEO. D. LUDLOW, Supt.

To Capt Youngs

Captain Youngs permitted almost a month to go by before he acted upon this order. Perhaps he did not relish the task of prying into the lives of his neighbors. Probably, however, the heavy snow-fall of January 31 ushered in a bitter February. At any event, one week before the report was due at Jamaica, he issued the following orders to his subordinates:

Oyster Bay 22 February, 1781

To Sargt Joseph Lattin I received Orders from the Police Office of the 31 January to make a registure return of all the Inhabitants both Men Women & Children both White & Black Horses Stock Carts Waggons Hay and Grain of all Sort and you are required to go around and take a Particular a Count of all Beginning at your house to Capt Weekeses So to Birdsall Neighborhood then beginning at Durland all below and the West side of the Brooke by Vanwkes and Hogisland taking a Particular acCount of all their Timberland of Each and Ordering them to Cut and Cart immediately and those that has not got their Proclamation Wood Down to get it immediately for the fleet is a Coming again & the other wood must be got Down that was Contracted for to the Landing by the 20th of March about 2 cords off each acre——

you are required to take an a Count and Deliver it to me by Sunday Morning as I may be able to Make a General return of the hole

DANIEL YOUNGS Capt.

Oyster Bay, 22d February 1781

To Sergt William Bennit I have received Orders from the Police office of the 31 January to make a regular return of all the Inhabitants both Men Women & Children White & black Horses Stock Carts Waggons Hay and grain of all sort & you are required to go round and take a Particular a Count of all Beginning at your house and so to Richard Weekes So to Motton town and taking all on the West Side of the road that leads throe Jerico to Simonsons all in that Quarter not missing any Beginning at John Carpenters at the West Side of the road to Benjamin Townsend and take an account of all the acres of Wood Land Each man has and Bring the account to me by Sunday Morning as I may Be able to make a General One of the Whole.

DANL YOUNGS.

The three charts printed here together with a fourth which is missing but is known by the tabulation at the bottom of the third chart, reveal much precise information concerning the size and



	Men	Women	Child	White	Men	Women	Black	horses	Cattle	Sheep	hogs	Carts	Waggons	Fresh hay	Salt hay	Plain hay	Sege hay	Wheat	Rye	Corn	Oats	Acre of Woodland
Joseph Latting.....	1	2	7				4	8			3	1					2	10	8	5		17
Miner Suydam.....	1	1	5		1	1	3	13	35		5			1	1	2		30	30	15		17
John Suydam.....	1	1	5						1		1											
Edmond Weeks.....	4	5	1				2	13			7	1				1	2	3	8	8		10
Daniel Birdsell.....	3	2	2				3	12	10		7	1				1	2	10	6	10		11
Henry Downing.....	3	4	5				6	21	15		9	1		1			3	10	14	18	20	12
John Vannostrant....	2	2	1				2	4	12	12	7	1			1	2	1	10	30	20		12
Nemiah Charshar....	2	3	3				3	10			7	1				1	2	7	7	15		6
(Cheshire)																						
Henry Durland.....	5	6	3				3	10		2	6	1				1	1		16	20		5
John Miller.....	1	1	5				3	6			4					1	1		4	4	2	9
Jeromas Benit.....	3	1	2		1	1	2	2	2		6	1					1	4	20	2		
William Crisel.....	2	2	6				1	1	1		5								8	12	8	8
Thomas Alsop.....	2	3	1				2	5			5	1					1	10	10	4		
Samuel Nickles.....	1	3	6			1	3	4			2											
Jonathan Rosel.....	1	2	1								2											4
Absalom Townsend..	1										2											
Daniel Sealy.....	1	3	4				1	1			1											
Black Jacob.....					1	1	2															
Samuel Bald(w)in....	2	1					1	2			3											
Samuel Fousdieck....	1	1	5						2													
William Ceef.....	1	1	2								1											
French Joe.....					1	1					3											
Mical Butler.....	1	1	2				1	1			1											
John Townsend.....	2	3	1								1											
Henry Townsend....	3	1	2		1		2	8			1								3	5		2
Denias Alin.....	1	1	2																			
Nicolas Wacks.....	1	1	2								6	1										
John Henderson.....	2	2	5				3	1			2											
John Vilito.....	1	3	5								7											
Jacob Mot.....	1	2	1				1	1			2	1										
Jeams Farley.....	1	1	2				1	3										10		10		
John Townsend.....	1						1	2														
Peter Underhill.....	1	2	4						2													
Mandwil.....	1	1										1										
John Townsend.....	1	1					2	6			2						3					25
Easter Townsend....								4			16						1					27
Townsend Parish....	3	2	5				6	9										10	10	6		12
Nicolas Wright.....	1	1	5		5		2	3			2											
Townsend Weeks....	2	2	1		1		5	6			1									50		6
John Weeks.....	2	3	1				3	6												10		15
Thomas Wright.....	1	2	1				1	3			2									8		6
Doctor (?) Witson...																						
and hody lines.....	2	2	2																			
Robert Colwil.....	2	3	1				1	3														
	68	79	106		6	10	9	70	181	74	119	6	17	2	3	9	21	114	164	235	30	204

	Men	Women	Child	White	Men	Women	Black	Child	hogs	Cattle	Sheep	hogs	Carts	Waggon	Fresh	Salt	Plain	Sege	Wheat	Rye	Corn	Oats	Acres of Woodland
John Bennet.....	3	3	1		4	8	7	7	1								1		12	10	10	10	
Jehanes Bennet,....	3	3	3		4	13	6	9	1								1		16	15	10		
Nicholas Bennet.....	1	1	4			5		3															8
Gedian Wright.....	1	2	3		2	6	8	8	1								1		10	12	8		10
George Townsend...	5	4	1	1	3	6	18	21	13							2			25	4	20		14
John Kirk.....	1	3		1	2	8	9	7	1														10
Gilbert hair.....	3	2	3		4	5		3	1										6	15			
Benjamin Chester...	1	1	4					1															
Richard Weekes....	2	2	4		2	6		3	1										12		8		2
Samuel Bur.....	2	3	2		2	6		4													4		3
Daniel Burr.....	2	1	5		2	4		4	1														3
Garret Wortman....	2	4	3		6	10	10	5	1								2		20		20		18
William Bramberg...	3	1	1		2	3		5	1							1			4	8	3		5
George Fertse.....	1	2	4		3	12		4	1							1			6	10	2		5
Jacob Weekes.....	2		3		1	2		2															
John Carpenter.....	2	3	1		3	8	5	3	1										3	10	4		
Samuel Willis.....	1	1	2		4	4		3	1							1			5		6		
Jacob Searing.....	1	1	3			1		2															
Samuel Robans.....	2	3	8		2	8		10	1										16	10	5		
Benjamin Townsend.	1	3	3		5	22	12	8	1								3		20	8	3		25
Jobes hubs .....	1	1	4		1	7	9	4															
Syas Lattin.....	3	2	2		4	21	14	13	1							5			25	10	9		6
William Sinason....	2	3	5	2	5	25	50	7	1							1			20		15		40
William Davis.....	1	1	6					3															
William Tapen.....	2	2	6			2		2															
48	52	80	4	4	11	64	204	146	133	3	15	2	17	200	112	127							139



	Men	Women	Child	White	Men	Women	Black	Child	horses	Cattle	Sheep	hogs	Carts	Wagons	Fresh hay	Salt hay	Plain hay	Sege hay	Wheat	Rye	Corn	Oats	Akers of Woodland
Samuel Townsed....	3	4			1	3	4	5	20	19	9		1		1	2			torn		50	40	12
Jonathen Cabbs.....	1	1	1			1																	
Lanck Thorn.....	1	1						1															
Adam Seman.....	2	3					2																
David Shadin.....	3	2	7						1														
Ben Homer.....					1	1	2					1											
Jeney Lines.....						2	1																
Timothy Semon.....					2	2	4	2	1		4		1										
Rogers.....	1	1	2						2														
Jeans Sambo.....					1	1	2		1		1												
Thomas Smith.....	5	6			3	3	5	9	30	56	23	1			2			30	50		30	20	25
Henry Ludlam.....	3	5	2	1	2			7	29	38	20	1		1	1	5		40			10	20	20
Daniel Ludlam.....	1	2						2	1	7	6							10				4	
Joseph Ludlam.....	3	4	3	1	1			3	11	9	8	1			1			10			10	10	2
Beany Ludlom.....	2	1							4														
Thomas Ludlom.....	1	3	4					2	6	20	2	1			1						20		10
Daniel Alin.....	3	3						2	8	10	5	1			1			10			10		10
Widow Alin.....	3	3	2					2	5	6	5	1			1			5			5		5
	32	39	21	10	16	16	18	36	118	165	84	6	2	1	12	2		141	30	139	90	84	
	68	79	106	6	10	9	9	70	181	74	119	6	17	2	3	9	21	114	164	235	30	204	
	48	52	80	4	4	4	11	64	204	146	113	3	5		2	17		200	112	127		139	
	40	56	70	6	7	13	13	78	323	153	110	10	9		4	42	37	325	294	99	26	221	
	188	226	277	26	37	51	248	826	538	426	25	43	3	22	70	58	780	600	600	146		684	

resources of eighteenth century farms around Oyster Bay, and of the social and agricultural life of the period. These four charts note 691 white persons and 114 negroes, or a proportion of six white to every one black. Women outnumber the men 226 to 188. Thus there were 16% more women than men. It must be remembered of course that the census was taken during war conditions and many men were probably away from home.



(Photo by Fred H. Selchow, Present Owner)

*Homestead at Jericho of Elias Hicks, Showing North Side  
(now the front), Originally the Rear*

Colonial families are often assumed to have been generally large. According to the figures of these charts, the population of 81 families was as follows:

Number of families	Children
10	0
15	1
17	2
12	3
9	4
11	5
4	6
2	7
1	8

Thus it is clear that over half the families in the area had two children or less, and only 8% had more than five children. The weakness in these statistics is that we are unable today to discover what



the census-taker considered a child and what an adult. The earlier census returns used either 10 or 16 as the dividing line between children and adults. 16 was probably the age in 1781. Obviously some of those listed as adults are grown-up children, for Thomas Smith is listed as having no children in his household, yet on May 5, 1781, he wrote to Captain Youngs that his son had taken a horse to Captain Youngs the previous spring. This same ambiguity characterizes every colonial census.

According to the United States Census of 1790, the average house in America had seven people living in it. This figure is even higher for the Jericho-Oyster Bay area in the census of 1781, where the figures for the white population there break down as follows:

3	houses	had	1	inhabitant
3	"	"	2	inhabitants
4	"	"	3	"
9	"	"	4	"
8	"	"	5	"
12	"	"	6	"
15	"	"	7	"
8	"	"	8	"
5	"	"	9	"
10	"	"	10	"
1	house	"	11	"
1	"	"	12	"
1	"	"	13	"
1	"	"	14	"

The proportion of negroes per house in the same area is interesting. Fifty-eight farms, comprising 58 of the number of houses in the census, had no negroes at all. Of the twenty-four houses with negroes living in them, thirteen had two or less, as shown by the following table:

8	houses	had	1	negro
5	"	"	2	negroes
2	"	"	3	"
4	"	"	4	"
2	"	"	5	"
2	"	"	8	"
1	house	"	9	"
1	"	"	11	"

The census shows that in spite of persistent requisitioning there were still more cattle in 1781 than people, for there were 826 cows. The hogs numbered 420, or approximately one for every two persons. The holding of sheep was surprisingly small, only 538, as recorded.

2126 acres of land were under cultivation, or 2.64 acres per person. Thomas Smith had the largest farm in the census, containing 100 acres under cultivation, 25 in woodland and 118 animals. Henry Ludlam was second, with 70 acres of grain and 20 acres of woodland

and 104 animals. Henry Downing had 62 acres under cultivation, 12 acres of woodland and 51 animals. These are the three largest farms and reveal a very modest farming community far removed from the large estates of the present day in and near the same locality.

In spite of the heavy drain of the British upon the horses on Long Island, the census shows that in 1781 there were still 248 horses, or one for every 3.2 persons. The cart and wagon figures, however, reveal how far the British had depleted the vehicles of the area, for



(Photo Courtesy of The Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress)

*Carll Homestead (Barker Estate) South Huntington*

only 25 carts and 43 wagons were listed. Many families had no wagons at all. Only one man had both a cart and a wagon. It is likely, however, that lighter vehicles used for travel were not entered in these figures, although the usual travel was on horseback, for the British were primarily interested in heavy wagons that could transport bulky foodstuff and cord wood.

These figures cannot be accepted as typical of all Long Island in 1781. No generalizations regarding other areas can be made safely. They show simply the conditions in the one area they comprise, and we should be grateful for even this much rather than vexed that the reports from the other fourteen captains of the militia have not been preserved. Were they to be unearthed, added to these preserved by Captain Youngs and his family they would form a priceless picture of Long Island during one of its most crucial periods.

Other orders in the Youngs' *Order Book* indicate that the charts were used to equalize the burden among the entire population of supplying provisions and horses for the British. On April 10, 1781,



Colonel Hamilton ordered the deficiency in horses to be "made up as usual by a small tax to be levied by the Captain on every person in the county agreeable to the Captain's roll of the value of their estates." This statement indicates that all the captains had a census of their territories similar to these of Daniel Youngs. Other items in the *Order Book* deal with the almost frantic effort of the British to secure horses. New York was the headquarters of the British Army at this time, and it was evidently short of horses. However, the census lists, while indicating where and in what quantities the horses existed, did not secure horses fast enough.

In spite of the systematic survey, the inhabitants continued to win the game with the occupying forces right up to the sudden end of the war and the withdrawal by sea of the British troops from New York. The statistics presented here indicate clearly that the inhabitants of Long Island, although subscribing to the oath of allegiance to England, were at heart apathetic to Britain's needs and in numerous ways worked towards the ultimate success of the American cause in many of the same ways that occupied Europe dealt with its temporary Nazi dominators in World War II.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### *Long Island Tribunals*

FREDERIC WHITE SHEPARD

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and of Lawyers Club of Brooklyn*

THE administration of justice among the aboriginal inhabitants, who were Algonkins, was patriarchal and tribal. Disputes within the family or family clan were decided by the head of the family. In disputes between families or clans, or members of different families or clans, the tribe at large acted as the tribunal.

The primitive democratic character of early tribunals, seeking to administer the human desire for justice, in civilizations having no connection with one another, is shown by the fact that this custom originally prevailed in the primitive Greco-Latin and Germanic communities. Our jury system is thought to be an evolutionary development of this custom. Homer (an Asiatic Greek, about 800 B. C.), in the earliest record of a trial, has "The People" administering democratic justice in the market place, to decide the sum which should buy off guilt in a blood-feud case. Possibly the same words now used in criminal and formerly in mandamus and certiorari proceedings date back to that time.

The jurisdiction of the tribe extended over whatever territory the tribe was able to hold; thus these territories were the first judicial districts of Long Island. Prof. John H. Wigmore, in *A Kaleidoscope of Justice* p. 449, cites "Father Brebeuf's report for 1636 to his superior Father LeJeune on the Mission to the Hurons", part 11, chap. V, which gives an account of an Indian trial. At one stage, the defendant, coming forward, says, "Behold, here is something for him to smoke," speaking of the complainant who would avenge a death caused by the defendant. Father Brebeuf reports that "they believe there is nothing so suitable as tobacco to appease the passions. That is why they never attend a council without a pipe or calumet in their mouths. The smoke, they say, gives them intelligence and enables them to see clearly through the most intricate matters." The peace pipe played an important part in Algonkin tribunals and treaty conferences as it did in those of the tribe with whom William Penn dealt and in most of the other tribes. Possibly, pipe smoking in court, even at this late day, might be of benefit to all concerned.

The West India Company was incorporated in 1621 by the States General of the United Netherlands after fifteen years of agitation for a private trading monopoly to promote the cause of Calvinism and aggressive action against Spain's shipping and colonies. The company was given practically unlimited power to increase commerce and profit, with only passing mention of colonization. Nevertheless some colonization took place although not on the scale attained by the



English. Under the company's rules, home industries were allowed only for domestic consumption. A housewife who sold products of her spinning wheel to a neighbor would be guilty of breaking her oath to the company and ran the risk of being expelled from the colony as a perjurer.

The laws of the United Netherlands became effective on Long Island and those laws were based on the Code Justinian (the Civil Law) but modified by the laws and customs of the Province of Holland, and came to be known as the Roman-Dutch Law. A survival of the Feudal Law resulted in the establishment in New Netherland of manors and patroons. The Canon Law, although introduced into Holland contemporaneously with the Roman Law, was, after the Reformation (16th century), restricted to testamentary affairs, matrimonial cases, the administration of oaths and the like. The municipal law of the city of Amsterdam was transferred to this country and governed the Dutch towns on Long Island, except as modified by the director general and council, which was also the court of appeal. The jury system, as we know it, was not in effect. The members of the court performed the functions of a jury.

The first town court of which we have any record was established in Hempstead in 1646. Then followed Flushing, Middleburg (later known as Newtown), Amesfoort (Flatlands), Midwout (Flatbush), Breuckelen, Rustdrop (Jamaica), Bushwyck, and New Utrecht in 1661. Each town was a judicial district. The new Amsterdam court of the Schout, Burgomasters & Scheppens had no jurisdiction on Long Island. Cases brought in that court involving real estate on Long Island were referred to the local sessions courts.

The director general and council, which consisted of the chief colonial officers of the West India Company and the skippers of the company's ships who happened to be in New Amsterdam, had executive, legislative, and judicial power. They made many changes in the law and appointed the judges but the English settlements (Gravesend, Newtown, Flushing, Jamaica and Hempstead) under Dutch authority, elected magistrates, constables and clerks. The Dutch governor and council claimed the right to sanction the elections before they became legal, but that authority was exercised only formally until the advent of Petrus Stuyvesant. He ruled with an iron hand and a wooden leg, and was a hard man to get along with—a real dictator while he lasted, *i. e.*, until 1664. On one occasion he ruled that it was treason for private persons to petition against magistrates, with or without cause. The petitioners were indicted and sentenced to fines and banishment. They were also denied the right of appeal to the States General. The West India Company supported the governor's stand but the States General recognized the right of appeal, suspended the sentences and summoned the governor to The Hague to defend his action. The mandamus directed him to restore the petitioners to the full rights of colonists. When the writ of mandamus was being read to him he grabbed the parchment, tore off the seal and sent only a representative to The Hague. But the petitioners were restored to full rights.

The Dutch towns on Long Island had been permitted, from time to time, to have town courts and to elect magistrates, following the example of the towns inhabited by the English. The towns in what is now Kings county formed one judicial district, those in Queens another, and Suffolk a third, but as the majority of the towns in the present county of Suffolk refused to submit to the Dutch, a district court was never organized in that district.

When the English took over the government of Long Island, they brought with them the conception of Natural Law as opposed to the absolute power of the sovereign to prescribe law. This they had fought for prior to Magna Carta and the Reformation and were to fight for again prior to and after the Declaration of Independence which enunciated the principle. Francis Lewis of Flushing was one of the signers of the Declaration. Mr. Justice Robert H. Jackson has enunciated the principle again at Nuernberg. It was no mere accident that the first professorship of law in America, established at Kings (now Columbia) College in the City of New York, should have been denominated a chair of "Natural Law."

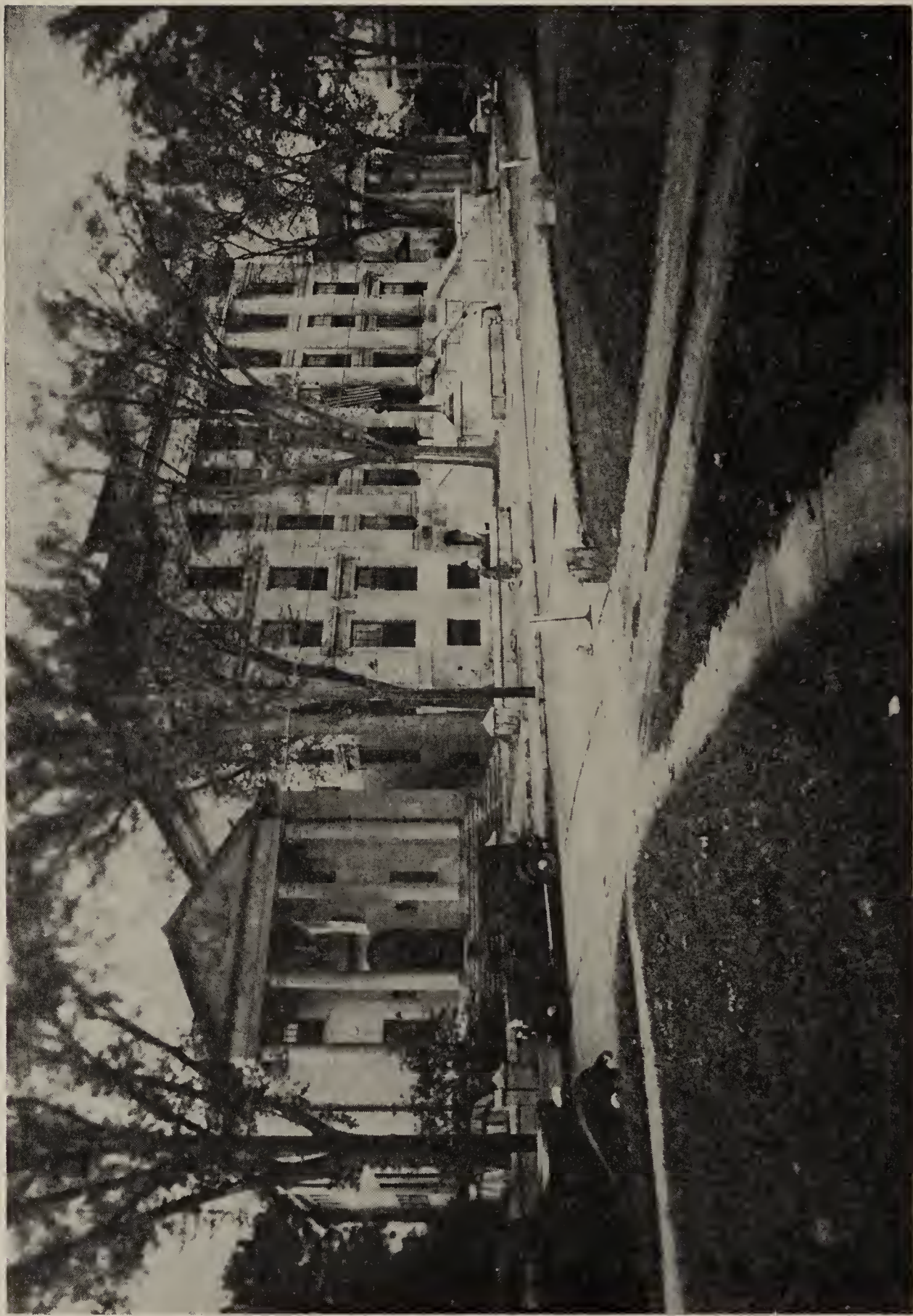
The jury system was established. They brought with them also the English Common Law which grew up from popular customs, decisions of the judges, and verdicts of juries to whom, in the beginning, novel questions were submitted—questions to which no answer was found in the written law or in precedent.

The east end towns were not at first subject to the control of any colony, nor had they any political connection with each other before the conquest of New Netherland by the English which took place when the Netherlands and England were not at war. Being too remote from Europe to derive any protection from that quarter, and having no political alliances here, the whole power of government was retained by and vested in the primary assemblies of the people; an instance of a pure democracy which, apparently, answered all the ends of the government. The people (who in the town of Southold must be church members) elected their magistrates and all other civil officers (who must have the same qualification) and established town courts which decided causes with or without the intervention of a jury, according to the discretion of the court itself, subject to the ultimate decision of the town meeting (then called the general court) if either party appealed.

The town of Southold at that time included Riverhead. The first President Dwight of Yale College, in his journal of travels through Long Island in 1804 states: "No lawyer, if I am not misinformed, has hitherto been able to get a living in the county of Suffolk." Punishment of criminals must be "according to the minde of God as revealed in his word."

In 1665 a convention at Hempstead established the first judicial districts under English rule, dividing the Island into ridings (a corruption of the Yorkshire word "trithing", since there were three). The towns in Suffolk county constituted the East Riding; Kings county and Newtown were in the West Riding; and the remainder of Long Island belonged to the North Riding of Yorkshire. The Duke's





*Suffolk County Courthouse at Riverhead*

The smaller building at left houses the County Treasurer and the County Auditor. Beyond the courthouse is the office building of the County Clerk.



Laws, adopted at this convention, provided for local courts with no appeal in minor causes; and for treble damages against anyone suing for greater damages or debts than actually due. Final appeal was to the court of assize, composed of the Governor and council.

The judgments and decrees of the court of assize were such as the governor dictated; his assistants not being colleagues but merely advisers who held their authority under him and were dependent on him. The governor was both judge and legislator. He interpreted his own acts and not only pronounced what the law was but what it should be. There were many protests and rebellions against these conditions.

The first colonial legislature met in the city of New York in 1683; abolished the three ridings and substituted the counties of Kings, Queens and Suffolk as the judicial districts, established a court in every town to be held on the first Wednesday of every month; a court of sessions in each county to be held annually, that for Kings to be held at Gravesend, for Queens at Jamaica and for Suffolk at Southold and Southampton alternately; a court of general jurisdiction called a court of oyer and terminer and general gaol delivery to be held in each county once a year. The governor and council constituted, *ex officio*, the court of chancery, the supreme court of judicature of the province from which appeals lay to the king. One year later the court of assize was abolished. Eight years later justices of the peace were substituted for the town courts. A jury could be had on the demand and at the cost of either litigant. Lay judges were considered qualified to decide even capital cases but when the title to land was in question they had no jurisdiction. The governor and council were eliminated from the supreme court of judicature.

The power of taking proof of wills and issuing letters testamentary and of administration was vested in the governor who in some localities appointed a delegate to take proof and transmit it to him. Not until 1778 did the legislature order the appointment by the governor and council of a surrogate in every county.

There seems to be no record of witch burning or ducking (the ordeal of cold water), or of lynching on Long Island, but there are records, not so ancient, of torture to force confession.

In the eighteenth century leading practitioners formed a "Law Society" and provided for the study of law in their offices. Prospective clerks must have two years of college education, must bind themselves for five years and pay a fee of £500. It was provided that "The sciences necessary for a lawyer are 1. The English, Latin and French Tongues. 2. Writing, Arithmetic, Geometry, Surveying, Merchant's Accounts or Bookkeeping. 3. Geography, Cronology, History. 4. Logic and Rhetoric. 5. Divinity. 6. Law of Nature and Nations. 7. Law of England."

The constitution of 1777 made no changes in the courts or judicial districts except to institute a court for the trial of impeachments and the correction of errors, consisting of the president of the senate, the senators, chancellor and judges of the supreme court. Neither the judges nor the chancellor could vote, but were permitted to explain their decisions. The right of trial by jury was preserved.



The constitution of 1821 provided for the appointment of all judicial officers, except justices of the peace, by the governor with the consent of the senate; the governor to appoint justices of the peace if the supervisors and the judges of the respective county courts could not agree on any appointment. Under the authority of this constitution the legislature divided the state into eight judicial districts, Long Island being in the second district.

The eight judicial districts were continued until the constitutional amendment of 1905 which authorized the legislature to erect out of the second judicial district another district. The legislature acted and left Long Island and Staten Island to compose the second district. The constitutional convention of 1938 sought to give the legislature power to erect still another district but the proposition was rejected by the voters. Unsuccessful efforts to amend the constitution to permit the erection of Nassau and Suffolk counties into a tenth judicial district had been made in 1931 and 1935. Several efforts had been made by the legislature to erect the district regardless of the constitution but these were vetoed by the governors. Another effort was made in 1944 and the bill was signed by Governor Dewey but the Court of Appeals held the act to be a violation of the constitution, since the power given the legislature to "alter" the districts did not imply the power to "erect". The purpose was finally accomplished by an amendment to the Constitution adopted at the general election of 1947, giving the legislature power to erect a 10th district composed of Nassau, Suffolk and Queens counties, and by act of the legislature with the approval of the governor in 1948.

The power to appoint judges, except to fill vacancies, was taken from the governor by the constitution of 1846. The Court of Appeals succeeded the supreme court of judicature which had been composed of a chief judge and two puisne judges appointed by the governor; the present Supreme Court was created with general jurisdiction in law and equity; the judges of the Court of Appeals to be elected by the electors of the state and the justices of the Supreme Court by the electors of the several judicial districts; elective county judges and surrogates were made constitutional officers; justices of the peace to be elected by the electors of the several towns. The Nassau County charter, adopted by referendum in 1936, abolished justices of the peace and provided for the District Court of the County of Nassau.

The legislature was empowered to establish tribunals of conciliation but this power seems not to have been exercised.

The work of the constitutional convention of 1869 was rejected by the voters, except the judiciary article which directed the legislature to provide for a referendum on the appointment of judges and justices by the governor. On the referendum the voters rejected overwhelmingly the proposal to return to the governor the power to appoint the judiciary.

In 1882 an amendment directed the legislature to provide for general terms of the Supreme Court for appellate work and these continued until the end of 1895 when they were succeeded by the four appellate divisions. Circuit courts, courts of oyer and terminer, and

courts of sessions, on Long Island, were abolished by the constitution of 1894 and the appellate division was authorized to provide for an appellate term for the hearing of appeals from minor courts.

In the convention of 1915 another attempt was made to have the judges and justices appointed by the governor but the proposal was not adopted by the convention and the constitution submitted by that convention was rejected by the voters. Further attempts to bring about an appointive judiciary have been defeated either in the legislature or by the voters, but hope springs eternal in the executive breast.





## CHAPTER XXXVI

### *Banking*

#### SUBURBAN AND RURAL BANKING

NEW YORK State's first bank was founded in New York City in 1784 as the Bank of New York by Alexander Hamilton and other leading Federalists. It has operated continuously since then. The year was an eventful one. There was much rehabilitating and rebuilding to be done. The Revolution, which had ended the year before, had left the disunited states in a bad way financially as well as otherwise. An important part of New York City's business section had been destroyed by fire during the war. Long Island, which had been occupied by the enemy from the autumn of 1776 to the end of the conflict almost seven years later, was an area of desolation. Back came thousands of refugees who had abandoned their island homes and property after the Battle of Long Island and fled to Connecticut rather than submit to enemy rule.

The optimism of the people in 1784 was demonstrated not only by the establishment of the State's first bank. That same year the State Board of Regents was created and, at East Hampton, Clinton Academy, the first such institution in the State was founded, followed shortly by Erasmus Academy in Brooklyn.

The Bank of New York remained without local competition until 1799 when Anti-Federalist Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton's chief rival in political as well as business and social life, with several associates organized the Manhattan Company. Created ostensibly to supply the city of New York with water service, its charter included banking powers and thus was born today's great Bank of the Manhattan Company.

Generations before the establishment of New York's first bank, there was in almost every sizeable community in the province some citizen who provided his neighbors with banking service, such as lending funds on interest, sometimes receiving deposits for safe keeping and borrowing when necessary from outside sources in order to increase his lending power. The profession was older than Christianity and like the money lenders who were driven from the Temple in Biblical times, these private bankers were not always above reproach.

Perhaps the nearest thing to a bank on Long Island during the colonial era was the town of Hempstead itself, then in the County of Queens. To quote from Bernice Schultz's *Colonial Hempstead*:

"Early in the Eighteenth Century, it became common to end the year with a surplus which was put in charge of the trustees. As the surplus grew it was loaned out to individuals who gave their bonds for it and paid interest to the town, the exact opposite of present day municipal financing. Numerous regu-



lations were passed to control the loaning and management of this fund. In 1720 it was voted that no money held by the trustees should be used in any way without the consent of the major part of the freeholders, and every year the trustees were ordered to give a list of the bonds to the town clerk. These reports show year by year an ever increasing surplus. In 1742 the town had £168 'in Bank,' and 1766, £300, the responsibility of loaning, calling in, and collecting interest on this fund becoming a considerable burden. It was only a few years, however, before the Revolution had wiped out any such care."

All during this period and, in fact, for many years previous thereto and for some years thereafter, the principal medium of exchange throughout the colonies was English money. As early as 1695, in which year the Bank of England was founded to provide ready cash for the Crown, parliament had endeavored by various stringent measures to halt the flow of English specie to America. English ships often paid their crews in Spanish and other foreign coins in order to conserve English money for the motherland. American ships frequently received foreign specie for their cargoes and paid their crews in the same way, thus bringing a steady flow of doubloons, florins and even Asiatic pieces to the Western World. This practice continued until after the Revolution, even though certain of the colonies, notably Massachusetts, began minting their own money some years before the war for independence.

Under such a conglomerate state of affairs, it was only natural that bartering, which had its beginning in the earliest days for want of a minted medium, remained in general practice well into the nineteenth century. Even the private bankers of colonial days sometimes received payment of loans "in kind," which might mean fish, flesh, fowl or farm produce, a policy conducive to the same sharp practices employed in horse trading. "At the outbreak of the Revolution the very word *bank* was regarded with suspicion and distrust," declares William H. Dillistin in his *Historical Directory of the Banks of the State of New York*, 1946.

For some years after the Revolution New York City had a monopoly on the banks in this State. Not until 1827 was the Brooklyn Savings Bank established across the East River. In 1836 The Atlantic Bank in the City of Brooklyn was founded, but for many years thereafter the greater part of Long Island continued to depend upon private bankers.

Up to 1838 a bank charter was obtainable only by special act of the Legislature, which procedure was thwart with politics and entailed a great amount of pressure being brought upon political leaders whose word was essential to favorable action. In 1838 the State enacted its first general banking law but not until 1846 were charters issued to commercial banks other than through the Legislature. In the case of savings banks a similar step was taken in 1875 and in 1887 trust companies were included.

That the far-flung easterly end of Suffolk County became the pioneer in rural banking on Long Island is somewhat surprising. When

Nassau County was set up from part of Queens County in 1898, the new county had very few banks although its earliest settlement, Hempstead, went back to 1643-44. Not until 1887 did that flourishing community obtain its first financial institution, the Hempstead Bank. The Oyster Bay Trust Company and the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company were founded three years later and in 1892 came what is now



*Home of the First National Bank and Trust  
Company, Freeport*

the Freeport Bank and the same year the present Glen Cove Trust Company. The Nassau County Trust Company of Mineola was chartered in 1899, about the time the new county of Nassau established Mineola as its county seat.

Years before any of the foregoing banks were founded in what was to become Nassau, now the richest suburban county in the State if not in the nation, a group of local businessmen founded the Southold Savings Bank in the village and town of that name at the east end of the island. This was in 1858 when fortunes made from whaling by residents of that and neighboring towns were still intact. Two years



later the Sag Harbor Savings Bank was chartered at what until a few years before had been one of the leading whaling ports of the entire Atlantic seaboard.

The first commercial bank on Long Island outside of Brooklyn received its charter in 1864. This was the First National Bank of Greenport, which village twenty years before had been made the eastern terminal of the Long Island Railroad's first line extending the length of the island. The organizer of this bank was Grosvenor S. Adams. Until 1830 Greenport had been known as Sterling and until a decade before that its future site had been the farm of Captain David Webb which in 1820 was auctioned off by Augustus Griffin (later author of Griffin's Journal) for \$2,300 to David T. Terry, Silas Webb and Joshua Tuthill who developed the area. In 1884 a second bank was established at Greenport to be known as the People's National Bank. The Patchogue Bank was founded the same year. By then the Riverhead Savings Bank, the fourth oldest bank in Suffolk County, had been operating for twelve years, having received its charter in 1872.

The South Side Bank was established at Bay Shore in 1887, the Bank of Huntington in 1888 and the following year, the Bank of Amityville, the Bank of Port Jefferson and the Peconic Bank, the latter becoming the fourth such institution in Southold Town, making that town the leading banking area on the island east of Brooklyn.

The year 1890 saw the birth of the Suffolk County National Bank at Riverhead and the Oystermen's Bank and Trust Company of Sayville while the following year was established the Northport Trust Company, in 1893 the Babylon National Bank, in 1896 the Union Savings Bank at Patchogue and in 1897 the First National Bank of Port Jefferson.

Thus at the turn of the century Suffolk County had some thirteen commercial banks, none of which was located in the towns of Southampton, East Hampton, Shelter Island or Smithtown, and four savings banks. In 1901 came the First National Bank of Northport, in 1902 the Center Moriches Bank, in 1903 the present Citizens National Bank and Trust Company of Patchogue and the First National Bank of Huntington. In 1904, was established the Seaside Bank of Westhampton Beach, in 1905 the Mattituck National Bank and the East Hampton National Bank, in 1907 the Bank of Suffolk County at Stony Brook, the First National Bank of Amityville, the First National Bank of Islip and the First National Bank of Lindenhurst.

In 1908 was chartered the Bank of Southold, in 1909 the First National Bank of East Islip and in 1910 the Bridgehampton National Bank, the Suffolk County Trust Company at Riverhead and the Bank of Smithtown at Smithtown Branch. The following year brought the First National Bank of Bay Shore and in 1912 came the First National Bank of Southampton. Other banks were subsequently founded in Suffolk County as follows:

Bank of Babylon 1913, Osborne Trust Company at East Hampton 1917, Tinker National Bank at East Setauket in 1919, Huntington Station Bank in 1920, Bellport National Bank and Central Islip National Bank 1923, First National Bank of Cutchogue 1924, People's National Bank of Patchogue, and Long Island State Bank at River-

head 1925, Hampton Bays National Bank 1926, National Bank of Lake Ronkonkoma 1927, Eastport National Bank 1928, and the Lindenhurst Bank 1929.

The history of banking in Nassau County since World War I is to a great extent the history of the Nassau County Clearing House Association and, before that, of the Nassau County Bankers Association. Fortunately their history was compiled by Mr. William H. Kniffin, president of the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company, and published by the former Association in 1947. With Mr. Kniffin's permission, we are using below a portion of his interesting pamphlet, which was mimeographed under the title of "Fifteen Years of Constructive Banking."

### THE NASSAU COUNTY BANKERS ASSOCIATION

The story of the Nassau County Bankers Association cannot adequately be told because the minutes have been irretrievably lost. Only memory is left as a guide. The Association was conceived by Dr. Frank T. DeLano, then president of the Bank of Rockville Centre. It was organized during 1923 or early 1924. It was not intended to operate as did the Clearing House, but to be more in the nature of a fraternal organization. It had no "police powers." The banks worked together because of the Association but it had no jurisdictional powers. It had no code of rules. It was a medium through which bankers could function as a group, but the decisions were entirely group action. One of its major problems was the handling of the reward offered for the apprehension of the murderers of Mr. Ernest L. Whitman, a bond salesman, who was shot while in the lobby of the First National Bank of Bellmore during a holdup. The County of Nassau offered substantial reward supplemented by that of the Bankers Association. In due course the bandits were apprehended and punished and the reward, after long negotiation, was apportioned among several claimants.

The Association held two dinner meetings each year, the first being in the Hempstead Golf Club, May 27, 1924, at which the Rev. Richard Haggerty was speaker. There were not more than two hundred present. The officers changed almost yearly. It was, however, the Nassau County bankers who assembled on that memorable night, January 6, 1932, that led to the Clearing House. It was they who conducted the meeting. It was also through the Bankers Association that the Nassau County Chapter American Institute of Banking was formed in 1925, and the Bankers Association, followed by the Clearing House, has supported the Institute throughout its entire history.

A meeting of the Board of Governors of the American Institute of Banking was held at the First National Bank and Trust Company of Freeport, September 22, 1925, preceded by several conferences of the committee to draft the plan of organization. The first general meeting of which I have recollection was in the Mineola High School at which William Feick, now Vice President of the Irving Trust Company, spoke. The Chapter has had a remarkable career of success, and is now one of the outstanding "country chapters" in this country.



As soon as the Clearing House was organized in 1932 it was realized that the two organizations would parallel each other quite closely. For several years the Bankers Association conducted the semi-annual dinners, while the Clearing House functioned continuously. The work of the Clearing House was soon recognized as being the more important, with the result that the Bankers Association was merged into the Clearing House and the former ceased to exist. The merger took place officially as of May 5, 1938, the process having been under way since 1935. There was no little sentiment connected with the Bankers Association, Dr. DeLano having been its first president, followed by Dr. J. Clark Schmuck of Lawrence. It was this sentiment that kept it alive long after the Clearing House took over the active supervision of the banks.

#### IN A SMOKE FILLED ROOM

In a smoke filled room at the Garden City Hotel sometime around midnight, January 7, 1932, the Nassau County Clearing House was born. There were two hundred or more bankers representing some sixty banks there assembled who had been in session intermittently since ten o'clock in the morning. That was, in my judgment, the most momentous gathering of bankers ever held in Nassau County. The events leading up to that meeting are of such human interest and so important in the formation of the Nassau County Clearing House, and the writer had such an intimate part in those preliminary steps, that this story must be told in the first person or it will lack something essential to its understanding.

At that time banks were failing all over the United States. From a top of about 30,000 the number has now dwindled to approximately 14,000, the bulk of the shrinkage being in the late twenties and early thirties. Bank troubles were sweeping the county like a pestilence and had reached Long Island. The Long Beach Trust Company had closed; the Bank of North Hempstead at Port Washington had closed; and the fire was getting perilously near the heart of Nassau. The people everywhere had lost confidence in banks and were withdrawing their funds in volume. Gossip was rampant and disastrous. Friends were telegraphing friends in near and in far distant points to get their money out of their banks. The bankers themselves were almost in a state of panic, not knowing where and when the lightning would strike next.

I was sitting in my office in the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company at about seven o'clock of a December night in 1931 when Edwin G. Wright\* called me on the telephone and said he wanted to meet Dr. DeLano (then president of the bank) and myself in his office at eight o'clock on an important matter. I had not the slightest idea as to what he meant. At the appointed time we went to his office in the same building and found present the directors of the First National Bank of Rockville Centre and also the representatives of the State Banking Department and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

\* Mr. Wright (attorney) was brought into the matter through one of the directors of the First National Bank who was alarmed at the condition of the bank as he saw it.

It was then disclosed that the First National Bank of Rockville Centre (Capital \$200,000, Surplus and Profits \$164,199.26) was in trouble and had to have help. The question was, how that help could be obtained. The National Credit Association was then in operation. The bank had gradually sold its assets of the better type to meet a steady stream of withdrawals that had been going on for some little time, creating a continuous seepage of deposits which, if not stopped, would end in disaster.

#### NEW YEAR'S DAY GIVEN OVER TO BUSINESS

On New Year's Day, January 1, 1932, the directors of the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company and the Nassau County National Bank met some of the officials of the Brooklyn Trust Company in the latter's office and talked over the bank situation. A picture of the First National Bank had been obtained by a hurried but somewhat exhaustive examination made by men of the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company with the assistance of one or two men from the Brooklyn Trust Company, one of whom was an experienced bank examiner. We had worked around the clock before the Brooklyn meeting. Mr. George V. McLaughlin, president of the Brooklyn Trust Company, suggested that the bank be taken over by either the Nassau County National Bank or ourselves. Dr. D. N. Bulson, then president of the Nassau County National Bank, said that he did not feel they were capable of doing so; but the men of the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company declared they would undertake the job if they could be assured of the support of the Brooklyn Trust Company and the National Credit Association.

It was then to determine on what basis and how the First National Bank could be merged with the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company. The seepage of deposits had continued rather seriously since the Wright meeting. The tension on the part of the public was so high and so delicate at the time that great care had to be exercised that the secret should not leak out and no false move should be made. In order not to provoke suspicion, a meeting of the directors of the two banks was held at the home of George A. Powers in Garden City as of Monday, January 4, 1932, followed by a meeting at the home of Jacob Post in Freeport, Tuesday, January 5, 1932, where nothing of moment developed. It was, however, intimated at the Powers meeting that another bank was interested in such a merger, but nothing of consequence followed the Powers meeting, so that the idea of a merger went back to the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company as a problem to work out. The Post meeting (but not the Powers) was also attended by representatives of the Federal and State Departments, and a lengthy discussion of the joint groups was held running far past midnight.

#### MIDNIGHT MEETINGS

At around two o'clock in the morning of January 5, 1932, William P. Carl (now deceased), and who was spokesman for the First National Bank group, came down from an upstairs meeting of the First National Bank directors at the Post home, and said to me: "Mr. Kniffin, what would you do?" I immediately replied: "Bill, I think there is nothing



you *can* do at the moment except to put on the thirty-day clause tomorrow morning." That was the morning of January 6. The cash in the First National Bank was running alarmingly low; there was no immediate help in sight; the borrowing power of the bank had been exhausted; and it was only a question of *hours* as to how long the doors could be kept open. The withdrawal notice would give them time, and would afford a breathing spell. (The notice was made effective as of the morning of January 6.)

I then told the two groups that I would call together the banks on the south shore of Nassau County and see if a pool could not be



*Home of Nassau County Trust Company, Mineola*

arranged to take over some of the assets of the First National Bank. At about eight o'clock I called together the south shore banks from Valley Stream to Bellmore and asked them to meet me at ten o'clock at the Garden City Hotel, which they did. In a few words I explained the situation to them when William F. Ploch, then president of the National City Bank of Long Beach, arose and said: "This job is too big for this small group; why not get all the banks of the county in on it?" The meeting adjourned to meet at four o'clock. I went to the telephone booth in the hotel and called up some forty banks in succession. I tried to keep the matter secret (which I did not succeed in doing), but I got practically every man in every bank whom I asked for. I told them to meet at four o'clock at the hotel with enough of their men to say "yes" or "no" to a very important matter.

#### A HOUSE DIVIDED

The banks responded, but the many telephone calls had resulted in the rumor that something was wrong with the banking situation in

Nassau, and it was apparent that the county was seething with rumors of one kind or another.

When the bankers assembled (Walter Sherman, then president of the Nassau County Bankers Association presiding), the story was again presented to them with the idea of forming a pool to take over the assets and keep the bank going until something better could be worked out. Meanwhile, the depositors of the First National Bank had filed some \$50,000 of withdrawal notices which, if the deposits had been paid in cash (and this would have been the case), would have stripped the bank of all its available money. The matter was discussed at length at the afternoon session, and on taking a vote it was apparent that the county was sharply divided — one group against the other, and on the sharp division of opinion nothing could be done.

All sorts of proposals were made, such as for instance, if a certain percentage of the banks agreed, they would agree, etc. The banks would gather in little groups and discuss the question, come back and report to the chairman. Time was running on, and time was decisively of the essence, and we were getting nowhere. After taking several votes it was apparent that there was a deadlock and nothing could be put over effectively.

I had talked with Mr. Leslie R. Rounds, then as now vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and told him of the meeting and the seriousness of the situation. I had told him that he was the only man I knew who could handle such a gathering and begged him to come. He said he could not possibly get away. I called him several times during the evening and advised him of the situation, and again told him that the meeting was out of hand and nothing workable was in sight. He finally agreed to come to Garden City, and he did.

Sometime prior to midnight, Judge Howell came into the room. I met him as he came in and said to him in these exact words: "Judge, you've got to make the speech of your life tonight." He replied, as I remember it: "Leave it to me." We took a short recess while waiting for Mr. Rounds, during which time Judge Howell talked with the bankers, as only he could, and said, among other things: "What you men need is a Clearing House."

#### A SEED IS PLANTED

A committee was immediately appointed to draft a plan for a Clearing House. The committee retired and came back later with a rough outline of a plan for a Nassau County Clearing House. Thus it was born. Mr. Ploch was on that committee, and I believe chairman.

When Mr. Rounds arrived he surveyed the situation and then offered the proposition that the banks take over the First National Bank building at \$375,000, and the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company would assume the liabilities of the First National Bank. The building had cost the bank \$327,567.89 and its furnishing \$35,906.86 — a total of \$363,474.75. Mr. Rounds proposed that an assessment be levied on the banks of the county aggregating the purchase price, and based on their deposits. He asked the bankers to discuss the idea among their men and when they came to a decision, to report to Mr.



Sherman who kept the tabulation of the "ayes" and "nays." The responses were encouraging but not enough so to spell success. Proposals and counter-proposals and compromises were again offered from various parts of the room, and the proceedings came to the point where the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company held the key to the situation. It had held out in respect to the assessment on the theory that in agreeing to take over the First National Bank it had enough at stake without putting up any more money.

As the affirmative votes accumulated, but not enough to make the plan effective, Mr. Rounds finally took out his watch and said to Dr. DeLano standing by his side: "I will give you (so many minutes) to make up your mind. The closing notice is ready to be tacked on the door and all I've got to do is to make a telephone call and on it will go." That would have been the end of the First National Bank. The Doctor soon made up his mind and nodded "Yes" and the result was announced. A cheer went up from that smoke engulfed and highly electrified crowd. Mr. Rounds then said: "Now come over here and sign up and then go home and do it." The meeting broke up around three o'clock and I started back for Rockville Centre with Oscar Gast, and I remember distinctly saying to him: "Oscar, now we've got two runs on our hands."

The two Boards of Directors worked practically all night with the lawyers, shaping up the agreement to take over. It was signed by six o'clock in the morning. At eight o'clock on the morning of January 7, 1932, I took an office in the First National Bank and Mr. Gast took charge of affairs at the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company. We had already secured \$100,000 in cash from our New York correspondent. About nine o'clock the morning of January 7 an armored truck drew up before the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company with \$300,000 in cash (small bills), and two guards stood watch over the money until it was released later in the day by call from the Federal Reserve Bank. (The banks had wired in their subscriptions to the Federal during the early morning hours, but the Federal had anticipated this and sent the cash in advance.) The contributions of the banks were all cash contributions and not guarantees or warranties of any kind. I watched the \$100,000, which had been taken to the First National Bank, all day. The news of bank trouble had spread and the people were flocking to the First National Bank to get their money. At first it was only "small fry" and the dollar amount withdrawn was not imposing. At about noontime of that day (Thursday) we conceived the idea of giving the depositors a ticket which would be good for the amount in opening a new account in the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company. The depositors were withdrawing largely from savings accounts. I personally handled the larger ones and left the smaller depositors to the tellers. The transfer idea conserved the cash, and while we had a steady stream of withdrawals all day, at three o'clock I was persuaded the run would not get out of hand. The cash had held out. During the first day we paid out \$182,000 representing 375 closed accounts. The next day, however, the larger depositors came streaming in, but the transfer idea was

beginning to be effective, and the cash was equal to the demands. At the close of business on Friday, the 8th, it was a fair assumption that the crisis was over. Between Saturday noon and Sunday at midnight, working with an augmented force, every asset and liability account on the First National Bank books was transferred to our own forms; new passbooks were made ready; and at midnight of Sunday, the 10th, all the remaining assets and the new records were placed on a truck and taken to the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company, the doors were locked, and the First National Bank as a functioning institution closed its doors forever. A highly profitable and at one time successful bank was no more.

#### THE CRUCIAL MOMENT

There is, on every important occasion, a "crucial moment" which determines the result in its finality. Looking back upon the whole story of the First National Bank affair, my judgment is that the turning point was the determination of the directors to enforce the thirty-day clause; because that kept the bank open until help could come. It now seems a mathematical certainty that the doors would have been closed before noon on that fateful Wednesday because the cash (somewhere around \$15,000) would have been exhausted by twelve o'clock. It is a fair conclusion also that the credit for the successful outcome of the Garden City meeting was due to Mr. Ploch for suggesting a county wide participation; to Mr. Rounds for conceiving the idea of buying the building and eventually persuading the banks to go along; and to Judge Howell for his leadership in the ethical and moral sense. I simply called the meeting. (Mr. Rounds warned the bankers of the serious consequences of a bank of that prominence and in that location closing its doors.)

The consolidated statement of the First National Bank and the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company as of January 7, 1932 showed assets of \$6,351,373.52 — deposits of \$4,821,019.72 — capital funds \$418,145.42 — reserves \$433,140.48 — bills payable \$664,125. The deposits of the First National Bank were \$1,479,323.28, which amount was assumed by the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company.

#### A COSTLY BANK BUILDING

No sooner had the bankers of Nassau County taken over the bank building than they realized they had a "white elephant" on their hands. What to do with this costly investment was the question. Here it was — five stories of space (mostly vacant) and an empty banking room — in its departed glory. This sick orphan badly needed a foster parent who would love it enough to nurse it back to health.

The chief problem of the Nassau County Bankers Association and its successor, the Nassau County Clearing House, was the bank building already referred to, and located at Sunrise Highway and Park Avenue in Rockville Centre. The building was built at the peak of prices in the "twenties" by an institution at the time of about two and a half millions of resources. As an investment for a bank of that size



it was never justified. It was, and still is of fine quality, fireproof, with two elevators — a public and a private "lift." The banking room was in good taste and imposing. The counters were Italian marble, the side walls travertine, floors terrazzo, the ceiling high and highly ornamented. The basement contained heavy money vaults, coupon booths, storage vaults and a cold storage equipment. The office furnishings were of the very best and costly. Talking to an officer of The Chase National Bank about that time I said to him: "You have a fine banking room here, but no better in quality than the defunct First National." The building was far ahead of its time, and the bank was altogether too small to take on such overhead. The plot alone (40 x 100) cost the bank over \$80,000, the highest price land ever sold for in Rockville Centre.

#### A SALE OR A MORTGAGE?

Some sixty banks either *bought* the building for \$375,000 on that memorable morning of January 7, 1932 for "cash on the barrel head," or they made a loan *secured by the building*. Whether it was one or the other was a moot question for several years. I am not prepared to say which was in the minds of bankers at the time, but my personal opinion was, and still is, they thought they *bought* the building in fee simple. The wording of the agreement, however, left the answer in doubt. From time to time the question was raised and a committee was appointed to determine the exact legal status of the building. If it was a loan secured by mortgage, foreclosure would have to follow to effect good and marketable title. If the title was in fee simple a deed could be delivered.

On April 18, 1939 Martin V. W. Hall, attorney (now deceased), advised that the State Tax Commission and the Nassau County Clerk had concurred in an opinion that "we regard the deed as a conveyance in trust for purposes of liquidation and payment of the indebtedness, and not as a pledge or security in the nature of a mortgage." It was therefore entitled to be recorded free from the payment of a mortgage tax. This settled the long drawn out legal controversy as to whether the building transaction was a sale of realty or a loan secured by a bank building. The trustees of the building were the Nassau County National Bank of Rockville Centre and the First National Bank and Trust Company of Freeport. The Nassau County National Bank did most of the work. The village was not yet ready for so pretentious an office building. It was never fully rented until the boom times of the late war. Soon after taking over, the ground floor was rented as a bar and grill, for which it was never adapted. The upper floors were not in demand and the rents were nominal. Subsequently, the furnishings were sold at bargain prices and the marble counters were sold to another bank. The costly and impressive vaults were likewise sold at bargain prices. It was in truth a "white elephant."

In the minutes of the Clearing House of November 3, 1938 I find a report on the income for a year to be approximately \$7,200, with 15 out of 36 rooms and the ground floor vacant. It never carried itself by far. A committee was at one time appointed to endeavor to sell it. At the time it was reported by appraisers to be worth \$100,000. The

minutes of these days make frequent mention of this building problem. After some ten years a buyer was found who was bold enough to undertake the operation of the building. The sale price was \$45,000 with \$10,000 down and the balance on mortgage, about half the price the bank paid for the land alone. The new owner endeavored to make the building carry itself, but it did not. He was at one time badly in arrears as to interest and taxes, although he could well afford to have paid them out of other funds. His procrastination in respect to the fixed charges brought the matter to a head and foreclosure was at one time actually begun. With better management, however, and better times coming on, the rentals were steadily improving. In due course the mortgage was paid in full and the banks took their loss as a finality.

This brief sketch largely from memory faintly conveys the long drawn out anxiety this adventure in real estate cost the banks. Most, if not all, had charged off their participations long ago, and considered their loss as insurance against what might have been more serious consequences. Most certainly the avoidance of another bank closing was beneficial in the highest degree to the banking interests of Nassau County, and no doubt the investment was well made for that reason. The liquidation of the First National Bank was completed by the Bank of Rockville Centre Trust Company in 1939.

#### A NEW IDEA

The idea of a county clearing house was at that time somewhat new and the only guide in that respect was the New York Clearing House with its prestige and its powers and its traditions. It was considered one of the most powerful bank organizations in this country. Some of the Nassau County bankers were fearful that in trying to imitate the New York Clearing House the Nassau County Clearing House would become an examining body with the privilege of looking intimately into the internal affairs of the banks, and by men who would in a sense be competitors. The chief problem of the Clearing House, at its inception, was therefore how to persuade the banks that none of the cherished secrets would be revealed, and such as came to the attention of the Clearing House managers would be held inviolate to the extremest degree, and that principle has been followed religiously ever since. It is readily apparent that with the privilege as well as the power of going into a bank and making an examination would go the revelation of many matters that are not for public consumption. It required no little of banking genius to persuade skeptical bankers that a Clearing House would not be a dictatorial body, laying down hard and fast rules for the internal conduct of the banks. Mr. Ploch has done a masterful piece of banking psychology in obtaining the full confidence of the bankers in respect to secrets so jealously guarded by banks everywhere.

The present setup of the Clearing House will be found elsewhere. The manner of organization has been a matter of development and evolution; but it can well be claimed that this has been a smooth working and highly successful bank organization from the beginning.



The organization meeting of the Clearing House was held in Judge Howell's office on Monday, January 11, 1932. It will be remembered that the Clearing House idea had been born only a few days before — that is, on January 6, 1932. Articles of Association were then agreed upon, to be submitted to the Nassau County Bankers Association on January 19, 1932. A special meeting of the Bankers Association was held January 28, 1932, at which time Articles of Association were adopted and the Clearing House began to function. William F. Ploch was naturally the first Chairman, and Charles Machleid was the first Secretary. Harry Hedger was the first Vice Chairman.

One of the most practical and easiest functions of the Clearing House was to put the figures of the banks together to see how large we were in totals. As a matter of fact, the total deposits of the banks were at the time \$87,000,000. Today (1947) they are \$403,719,356 — fifty commercial and one savings bank. Consequently, the monthly reports were asked of the banks as of the 21st of each month, the first being February 20, 1932. These were continued monthly until the Clearing House asked for reports quarterly beginning October 1, 1944.

#### THE BANK HOLIDAY

The Bank Holiday began March 4, 1933 about fourteen months after the organization of the Clearing House. On a bleak and icy Sunday night soon after the Holiday began, the banks of Nassau County were asked to come to Judge Howell's office in relays with their latest examination reports. Several groups of bankers had been selected to go over the reports and determine how much, if any, new capital would be required to make it fully solvent. Judge Howell and Mr. Ploch had been working in New York and Washington on behalf of the Nassau County banks. They had worked out an overall plan in respect to the reopening of the banks when the Holiday should come to an end. The banking authorities accepted their appraisal of the various institutions as made by the special committee aforementioned, and in most instances the additional capital was provided by the directors, and in time to qualify the banks to reopen.

#### CLOSED BANKS

As an aftermath of the Bank Holiday several banks in Nassau County closed. A chronological list of these banks is taken from "The Banks of the State of New York" just issued by the New York State Bankers Association.

#### SUSPENDED BANKS IN NASSAU COUNTY

Bank of North Hempstead, Port Washington..	December 1931
Long Beach Trust Company .....	December 1931
First National Bank, Rockville Centre..	January 1932 (absorbed)
Sunrise National Bank, Baldwin .....	February 1933
Central Park National Bank .....	March 1933
First National Bank, Hempstead .....	March 1933
Bank of Valley Stream .....	April 1933

Sometime prior to the Bank Holiday of 1933, it was reported to the Clearing House that due to the effect of the depression then in process upon the loans and securities of the Citizens National Bank of Freeport, the solvency of the bank was impaired and the capital would need strengthening if the institution was to continue to function successfully. Thus far the Nassau County banks had come through the ordeal with but few closings, but further bank troubles would be fraught with unknown dangers. The banking structure had to be kept sound and above suspicion whatever the cost.

A meeting of the Nassau County banks was held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, February 17, 1932, when an arrangement was made whereby the banks of the County and the directors of the Citizens National Bank would jointly contribute funds to strengthen the bank's position. The majority of the stock of the bank was trustee'd for the benefit of the contributing banks and the Clearing House appointed a committee from their number to work with the directors as a steering and directional committee, but without any voting power. It was their function to help the bank with its current problems. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation also took an issue of preferred stock.

The writer of this history spent a considerable amount of time on this project over a period of years, but the bank was managed so conservatively that it could not show any appreciable operating profits. Various measures were introduced and some new blood brought in, but the earning power could not be brought back. In the course of time it was concluded that the better course would be to merge with some other bank. As a result the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which had insured the deposits, took out all the undesirable assets and put in the cash, and the merger with the First National Bank and Trust Company of Freeport was approved by the banks, March 4, 1942. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation is still (1947) liquidating the assets so taken over. The directors of this bank are to be commended for their courage and their generous contributions, without which it is almost a certainty that the bank would have closed its doors. Instead, however, all depositors have been fully protected and what might have been a tragedy was averted. This was another example of the working together spirit that pervaded the Nassau County banks at that time.

#### CLEARING HOUSE EXAMINATIONS

Taking a pattern from the New York and other clearing houses, the Nassau County Clearing House had hardly begun to function when the question of Clearing House examinations of the Nassau banks was a topic in hand. Most of the bankers knew that some clearing houses had examining staffs that examined the member banks, and some of these examiners were then the most highly paid in the country. It was first mentioned November 15, 1932, slightly six months after the Clearing House began to function. This right of examination could of course be consented to by the members; but many bankers were somewhat fearful of the idea, and many thought it unnecessary and ill-advised.



In the first place, it would require the services of either volunteers or paid examiners to cover more than fifty banks in a period of a year, or even two. It would add one more process to an already crowded banking calendar, and the banks were not friendly to the idea of letting clearing house men "look over their books." To have singled out certain banks for this process would have stamped them as a little under par and might have led to gossip or other unfavorable reactions. The idea never got much beyond the discussion stage, and in the light of events it is better so. For this reason, among others, some banks were reluctant to join the Clearing House, fearing some drastic innovation of this nature that would prove unsatisfactory and might have been annoying.

On February 10, 1933 the subject of examining the banks was formally brought before the Clearing House members. A motion was made to authorize the examination of any bank at any time, which resolution was amended to the effect that every member of the Clearing House submit to a special committee a copy of the report of the last examination by the State or Federal before February 20, 1933. The banks were directed to furnish any additional information the special committee might require, and to submit to an examination if the committee so decided. Thirty-three banks were in favor of this idea; eighteen were against it. There not being sufficient votes to pass the motion, it was defeated. A motion was then passed that the Clearing House be authorized to examine any bank at any time which in their judgment might be necessary. This motion was carried forty-six to four.

A lengthy discussion then followed in respect to taking over the Sunrise National Bank, and it would appear from the minutes that nothing definite was accomplished, the banks being advised to send their decisions to Mr. Ploch by noon of the following day, and the meeting adjourned at one-thirty a. m. However this may be, the Sunrise Bank was closed in February, 1933. As a matter of fact, the Clearing House meetings were as a rule long drawn out affairs, and the bankers literally burned the midnight oil frequently in discussing the many problems that were crowding in upon them at the time.

#### DIRECTORS' EXAMINATIONS

Realizing the fact that Directors' Examinations when made by the directors themselves and not by public accountants were in many cases inadequate and perfunctory, a committee was appointed in 1939 to draw up an outline of such examinations as a guide to the directors. After much deliberation the committee submitted such a plan in great detail, showing the exact procedure to follow in making such an examination. The plan as submitted to the banks was, if anything, too exhaustive and too exacting. The member banks were furnished the plan and the committee discharged. How far the plan has been followed is not known.

#### INTEREST RATES

One of the first questions that faced the Clearing House was the matter of interest rates on both time and demand deposits. The banks

having taken sizable losses through loans and bond depreciation, were in a mood to curtail operating expenses and reduce the overhead. The simplest and easiest way of course was to cut the interest on both type of accounts. The financial effect on earnings could easily be computed mathematically because it was merely a matter of percentages. The chief problem was the effect upon the volume of deposits. As a matter of fact, the banks faced the issue with no little fear and trepidation, well knowing that all banks would not follow a pattern and that competition might come in to hold up rates in one bank while they were reduced in others, with all the unpleasantness such a situation brings about. The general opinion was that if all banks were to go along on a single interest scale the result would not be so pronounced. But that was an obvious improbability. The banks also feared the competition of city banks, particularly the savings banks, in holding up interest rates while we in Nassau reduced them. The minutes of that time are crowded with discussions regarding this problem. While the banks wanted the reduced overhead they did not care to assume the risks of cutting interest rates, and until the government and the State stepped in and made a reduction mandatory the question was more or less unsettled. Interest on public funds was cut to one-half of one per cent, and on savings accounts to two per cent maximum. (Reduced later to one-quarter per cent on public funds.)

One of the prevalent practices of the pre-clearing house days was the payment of interest on demand deposits and particularly public moneys. I well remember the time, some fifty years ago, when the payment of interest on "daily balances" began. I remember that certain banks paid interest on practically all their deposits. Some of these interest minded banks are no more. I have as a banker received as high as four per cent on daily balances. It was not an easy matter to root out such long established practices. While the bankers of Nassau County desired to save the interest such practices cost, they were loath to change over. In the Clearing House minutes I find frequent discussion on the subject of interest on checking deposits, and it was only when the practice was forbidden by the Banking Act of 1933 that we too fell in line and discontinued this costly practice.

There was formerly a widespread idea that the easiest way to obtain deposits was to buy them—that is, to pay interest on all deposits at some rate, and I knew at one time a bank in Connecticut that paid interest on practically every dollar on deposit. That bank also is no more. On December 29, 1932 the first Clearing House regulatory measures were adopted as to interest on deposits. On November 3, 1933, by resolution, no interest could be paid on demand deposits, except as provided in the Banking Act of 1933.

#### INTEREST ON LOANS

One of the pronounced trends in the period here under review has been the question of interest on loans. Just when the downward trend began to manifest itself cannot be accurately stated, but for some ten years past borrowers have been importuning the banks for a reduction in the interest rate, first on mortgages, and then on collateral



and other loans. No sooner had the declining interest rates begun to take effect throughout the financial world than borrowers took notice of the lessening value of money and began asking their banks for reductions on existing loans and bargaining on the rate of new ones. Some of these requests have been justified, but some have been in the nature of threat to take the business elsewhere if concessions were not made. Some were even in substance a peremptory demand that the bank reduce the rate under threats.

The competition for loans, particularly in respect to mortgage loans, has been so noticeable that borrowers have now been educated



*First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Hempstead*

as to the value of money at interest, and the banks have for several years witnessed a steadily declining rate on mortgage and collateral loans. Here too the competition has been so keen that as a matter of self-preservation banks have been required to cut the rate again and again as the competition did its deadly work. The idea of loans on life insurance policies which were in olden days confined to the insurance companies has spread throughout the country, and banks have been competing with one another for these highly desirable loans by cutting rates even below the income on a government bond in order to get the business.

Nassau County has been no exception to this process, and the first question asked by the borrower today generally is: "What's your rate?" In other words, this is a borrower's and not a lender's market. Time was when the borrower expected the lender to name the rate and accept it as graciously as he could. The tendency today is for the borrower to name the rate he is willing to pay the lender to take it or leave it. In all my banking experience I have never seen competition

in respect to interest rates on loans so devastating, widespread and costly as it has been during the past five years.

#### THE BANKS AND WAR BONDS

Under the direction and untiring efforts of Surrogate Howell, Nassau County responded to the War Bond selling in full measure. The bond buying was spread among individuals, corporations with excess money, and banks as investments, together with workers in every field who bought through the pay roll deduction process. The latter process prevailed everywhere. It might be called automatic and in many cases compulsory saving, in that the employer deducted (by agreement) a certain amount on each pay day and applied the funds so retained to the purchase of bonds. It was installment buying of War Bonds.

The sale of war bonds in a community such as Nassau County is difficult to appraise as to the origin because of the many conflicting factors that enter into so large an operation. The direct sale by banks to customers can easily be summed up, assuming the banks keep such records. Added to this, however, should be the purchase of bonds by the banks for their own account in various campaigns, plus pay roll deduction sales and allocations which come from far and near. Consequently, the exact figures are almost impossible to obtain without a very close analysis of every transaction and its allocation to the place or the nature of its origin. However, Judge Howell's office which had charge of such sales in Nassau County, estimates that all sales of war bonds, 1941 to 1946, aggregate more than \$400,000,000. It is estimated that from 80 to 90 per cent of these sales were properly allocated to the banks of Nassau County.

Supplementing the avenues of buying above enumerated, was the selling of bonds at race tracks, and in the case of Nassau County, at Belmont Park, which was the only track covered by Nassau County banks. The sale of bonds had not gone very far when Judge Howell asked the bankers to take over the race track sales, leaving to them the problem as to how to do it. At first the banks went to Belmont with bonds of various denominations, a typist or two, some change, and sold and delivered the bonds "over the counter," while the women of the A. W. V. S. took orders from the Grandstand and Paddock. The Red Cross women sold stamps.

This plan only produced moderate results. There was no incentive to buy. The Westchester Racing Association then offered free admissions to all who bought bonds on Futurity Day. The admission ticket entitled the buyer to a bond when presented at any one of several banks in the Nassau County group at the track on Futurity Day. A sizable number of banks appeared at the track on the appointed day armed with bonds and typists and delivered the bonds in return for tickets. The Racing Association afterwards paid the banks for the amount of tickets turned in.

They had that arrangement only once. The Association next offered free admission to anyone buying a \$25.00 bond at the track and free admission to the Club House on the purchase of a \$100.00 bond. The



buyer had to pay the Government tax, but otherwise was admitted free. This really constituted buying the bonds at a discount. The public soon discovered this fact and sales were imposing and highly satisfying. The Association built some forty order booths which were manned by women of the American Women's Voluntary Service, always in uniform. The order was made out in triplicate. The Association also built a number of bank booths. These were manned by bankers. The customer presented his order blank to the bank, paid the amount, had his slips stamped and presented one to the tax window, paid his tax and received a ticket of admission. At first some twenty banks manned the bank windows; but the sales were not large enough to warrant so many bank participations. Gradually the process narrowed down to half a dozen banks, and on the last "meet" to one bank — my own. A corps of women was hired to man the cashier windows for that meet and the work proceeded smoothly and without errors of consequence. During the 141 racing days the bank window plan was used there where 90,315 bonds sold with a face value of \$4,855,350. The largest day was Memorial Day 1944 when 2,292 bonds were sold with a maturity value of \$110,000.

Altogether this experience was educational and highly satisfying — financially and patriotically. The money was escorted to the banks each day under Nassau County police guard, and in all that time there was no single untoward incident. The writer had personal charge of this work from its inception and here records that it was with no little relief that the last bond was sold and the last dollar safely lodged in the bank. He had ridden in the police car with the money in a car ahead, practically every day during this long selling campaign. Altogether it was an experience one does not soon forget, and the Clearing House may well be proud of its war record as a bond salesman at a race track.

#### CONCLUSION

Here then is the story of the Nassau County Clearing House Association as I remember it and have dug it out of the minutes, which have been exceedingly well kept. It is, altogether, a satisfying story of accomplishment and united effort, even if it did begin with a tragedy. A clearing house would have come to pass sometime; but it was Judge Howell who conceived the idea on that now memorable night at the Garden City Hotel. He has been our patron saint. What would have happened had Mr. Rounds not come out to that meeting is a matter of speculation. No one knows. I doubt if anyone present would have thought of buying a bank building that nobody wanted and nobody could use, at three o'clock in the morning, and what's more, paying for it in cash before noon of the same day. There were some sixty banks to harmonize and bring into agreement. That was no easy task. The division of opinion was sharp and decisive. But here is the history and here are the facts.

For his outstanding leadership at a critical time; for his adherence to strict secrecy in vital matters; for his vision and organizing ability and his long service as Chairman, we owe Mr. Ploch a debt of gratitude not easily paid. Nassau has acknowledged his service in a public dinner

and has "said it with silver." We now record it in history. With that leadership and devotion to a cause, the Nassau County Clearing House Association has become nationally known and famed for the excellency of its work. It has established the fact that a clearing house can function well in what is called "the country." It has set a pattern for others to follow. To be sure, it has a sizable number of banks as its field, and now has resources of more than four hundred millions. It has all that, and more; it has leadership and continuity of management that is so essential to success. It was born during the most trying time in the history of banking in this country. It arose out of a great necessity for united and prompt action in a crisis. It has justified its existence a thousand fold and prospered far beyond the hopes of all who were present when the first seed was planted in the smoke filled room fifteen years ago. Here is a banking job well done.

WILLIAM H. KNIFFIN.

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The Banks of Suffolk County organized as the Suffolk County Bankers' Association in 1924 for the purpose of developing joint action to recover taxes imposed on banks by the State of New York. The banks believed that such taxes constituted a violation of existing statutes. They contended that as these taxes were not imposed upon corporations other than banks they were discriminatory. The action of the Association was successful.

The organization thus created continued as a vehicle by which the banks of Suffolk County, meeting twice a year, spring and fall, might share opinions and act in concert when deemed necessary. The first officers of the Association were: Chairman — Francis Kline, president, First National Bank of Port Jefferson; Vice-Chairman — B. Frank Howell, cashier, Suffolk County National Bank of Riverhead; Secretary-Treasurer — Joshua A. Overton, cashier, Bank of Smithtown, Smithtown Branch.

In 1931 when evidence of a coming depression was apparent, a committee was appointed by the Association's president to prepare new articles of association in order to more tightly organize for the mutual protection of the banks and their depositors. Although the committee presented its report to the Association, the latter's members were not yet ready to adopt its suggestions.

During the now historic Bank Holiday in March 1933, Fred C. Orth, cashier of the Hampton Bays National Bank and then president of the Association, received a telegram from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the officials of which were charged with the grave responsibility of deciding which banks were to be permitted to reopen and which were to remain closed. The telegram informed Mr. Orth that the Federal Reserve Bank's officials would consider recommendations in this matter if made by duly constituted and organized banking or clearing house associations.

Mr. Orth called a meeting of all banks in Suffolk County without delay. At this meeting, held at the Central Islip High School, he



informed those present of the contents of the above telegram. It was then that the committee report, previously laid on the table without action, was unanimously adopted. The articles of association thereby enacted provided for a report of each bank's condition to a special committee appointed for the purpose, and for uniform rules which placed reasonable restrictions upon bank policies.

Thus was formed the Suffolk County Clearing House Association in 1933, with the following officers: President — Louis Auperin, vice-president, First National Bank and Trust Co., Amityville; Vice-President — Phillip R. Tuthill, president, Mattituck National Bank, Mattituck; Secretary-Treasurer — Vern L. Furman, cashier, Central Islip National Bank, Central Islip.

These officers were soon in consultation with the supervising authorities in connection with the banking situation in the county and through them during this critical period the new Association effectively performed the functions for which it had been organized. Of the fifty commercial banks in the county only six did not open on March 13, 1933 — the date set for reopening. It is significant that all six of these banks, however, did reopen within a period of six months for the latest, without loss of a penny to their depositors.

Suffolk County's record during those trying times for the entire nation thus stands out exceptionally well and reflects great credit upon the bankers of the county.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### *Medicine*

E. K. HORTON, M.D.

*President, Nassau County Medical Society*

IN COMPILING the history and progress of medicine on Long Island, one is forced to review briefly the development of medicine as a whole up to the middle sixteen hundred era when the island began to absorb some of the settlers from the mainland, especially Connecticut.

It can be observed that through the past two or three thousand years since the chronicle of man began, the art of healing, or medicine as it is known today evolved slowly, as people showing a certain penchant for caring for the ill and infirm gradually were set apart from others and devoted their time as far as they were able in this pursuit.

It was not always possible for individuals to devote all of their time to this practice because of their own economic necessities and as a result of this the increase in medical knowledge was necessarily slow in developing.

These individuals who were interested in the illnesses they were in constant contact with, very early realized the limitations which their own scanty knowledge set upon them, and so gradually, by observation in searching for reasons for these deviations from the normal they were led to devote more and more time to increase their stock of known facts.

So it came to pass that men like Andreas Vesalius braved the possibility of jail and death to dissect the human body and so likewise did Susruta, the Indian physician find that diabetes was caused by faulty metabolism of carbohydrates by the simple process of tasting urine from those afflicted and finding sugar therein.

All of these isolated facts were gradually fused into a literature available to those who had the human attributes of gentleness and sympathy, making them especially fitted to care for their ailing brethren. Following this schools were formed and medical training began to assume a scientific background especially in Europe.

All of this knowledge was, however, not available to our pioneer forebears, for the rigors and hardships of life in an unsettled and sparsely populated land offered little to those men who had spent their lives in treating the sick. Experience was the only necessary prerequisite for the practice of medicine in these early colonial times when physicians and surgeons were truly self-made. One needed simply assume the role of either or both and proceed to practice, depending only upon the gullibility of a scattered public. Experience was of course an asset in the absence of other qualifications, and on it alone the village blacksmith, cobbler, cooper or other artisan was invariably accepted as the family doctor, a custom which came to be followed as a matter of course. A knowledge of the herbs and how to prepare



them for medicinal purposes quite naturally led to recommending and in time selling them to ailing acquaintances with instructions as how best to use them to attain the desired results. Should a cure or marked improvement ensue, another medical career had been launched.

Very gradually did the colonists come to realize the inadequacy of this system, the final awakening being due not so much to the shortcomings of conscientious resident physicians as to the irresponsibility of itinerants who, besides shoeing horses or mending wagons on their rounds of the countryside, peddled pills, powders and liquids of their own concoction. There was also the traveling "medicine show" which moved from village to village, announcing its arrival with a free exhibition of physical feats and, when a suitable crowd had assembled, dispensing its magic cure-alls by high-pressure salesmanship. As late as 1773 the province of Connecticut found it necessary to prohibit this sort of thing.

Among the more efficient doctors of early colonial times on Long Island were the local ministers and school teachers whose professional training they supplemented along medical lines by home study, hoping thus to more fully serve the needs of their communities. Similarly, laymen of good standing and education, actuated by honorable motives, assumed the role of physician, thereby undoubtedly helping to safeguard the health of their neighbors. The province of New York in 1648 passed a law prohibiting the use of "force, violence, or cruelty upon or towards the Body of neither young or old without the advice and consent of such as are skillful in the said Arts (if such may be had) or at least some of ye wisest and Bravest then present and Consent of the Patient or Patients if they be Mentis Compotes."

Dr. Samuel Martin, the proprietor of Rock Hall in Hempstead Town from 1778 to his death in 1800, was among the highly regarded physicians of that period. Richard Moore, Adam Seabury and Benjamin Tredwell, likewise residents of Queens (now Nassau) County, practised throughout that area. In 1677 a Huntington farmer, Jonas Wood, was granted a license by the court of assizes to practice medicine on the grounds that he had already worked "divers considerable Cures in Chirurgery" on some of his neighbors. Nevertheless, many colonial housewives scorned the professional healers in favor of their own homemade remedies. Long Island's first resident English author, Daniel Denton, son of Hempstead's leading founder, paid a glowing tribute in his "Brief Description" to the curative powers of certain native plants including sassafras.

Not alone to plants did the colonists turn for their remedies. Fish grease, beaver oil, raccoon and eel skins were used as cures for aches, pains and bruises. The slimy skin of the eel bound tightly about the wrist was supposed to drive away the pangs of rheumatism. The use of whale oil for certain ills had its origin with the Indians as did that of poultices made from snakes. Live toads were roasted and pulverized to be taken internally with "vehiculum" to produce artificial fever. Snail-water and later tar-water, both calculated to cure consumption, smallpox, ulcers and dysentery by thinning the blood, were commonly used. There was such demand for tar and turpentine for medicinal and other purposes that in 1715 the town

of Brookhaven, in whose pine belt a large natural supply was being gathered, placed a tax of one shilling per barrel on tar and ten shillings on turpentine.

The sanitary standards of Long Island were far below those of the urban centers. Philadelphia founded the country's first hospital in 1725 and seven years later its first medical college. Among the earliest graduates of the latter was a Long Islander, Samuel Kissam of Great Neck, who received his degree in 1770. "Priest" David Rose prepared for medicine at Yale before coming in 1767 to serve as minister of the Southaven Presbyterian Church. During his pastorate,



*Mercy Hospital, Rockville Centre*

which lasted 32 years, broken only by active service with the American forces in the Revolutionary War, "Priest" Rose served his parish as physician as well as pastor.

Some Americans of that era who aspired to a medical degree studied abroad and upon their return to America chose to practice in the larger centers. Before 1700 New York City had a number of physicians, many of them graduates of medical colleges in England, Scotland and other European countries. In 1691, when Governor Slaughter died from unknown causes, a group of local physicians performed an autopsy the findings of which demonstrated both knowledge and skill.

On the other hand, plagues were not uncommon throughout the colonial period. Recurrent epidemics of smallpox, the most dreaded of diseases, spared few generations. Oyster Bay suffered a smallpox scourge in 1771 and Hempstead six years later. One of New York's worst epidemics was in 1751, ten years after inoculations had been introduced at Boston by Dr. Zabdiel Boylston whose experiments were at first roundly condemned by most other physicians and by



the clergy. Not until its preventative reactions had had time to become generally known from repeated demonstrations did the public accept inoculations. It then became the vogue to undergo treatment in small groups augmented by a certain number of those who, having had the disease, could supply serum for the others. As it was necessary for the group to be isolated for a time in one another's company, those of social standing often issued invitations to insure themselves desirable companions during the process. The outbreak of the Revolution brought a halt to group inoculations for fear of mass infection in the armed forces. Eventually vaccination proved more effective.

That the need of special medical care in certain cases was recognized in East Hampton Town as early as 1698 is shown by the town having paid £10 to a physician in Flatbush for treating one Sarah Whitehair, an East Hampton pauper, whose traveling expenses of £3 6d were likewise paid by the town. Six years later further treatment of this patient cost the town an additional £19, a staggering public expenditure for one ailing pauper at a time when, between 1696 and 1714, 200 deaths were recorded in that thinly populated town.

The first resident physician in the Hamptons, according to James Truslow Adams' history of Southampton, was Dr. Nathaniel Wade of Bridgehampton who is mentioned in the town records of 1701, following his treatment of a woman prisoner, as follows: "Dr. Wade administered physic, and let her blood, and we found she was never better, so we bade him forbear to meddle with her any more."

Other early physicians of Southampton Town were: John Mackie who died in 1758, Rev. William Reeve, William Smith, a native of Moriches, who died in 1775 and was succeeded by his son, John Smith; Samuel H. Rose and Samuel Latham.

According to a paper presented at East Hampton in 1934 by Mrs. Everett J. Edwards: "The first person mentioned in the records as a doctor in East Hampton is Jacob Baillergeau in 1703 and for a number of years after that as being a merchant, also a 'French Doctor.' He must have kept a store for the sale of general merchandise, for there is a record of the town having bought nails from him."

Dr. Edward Huntting, a graduate of Harvard in 1725 and the son of Rev. Nathaniel Huntting of East Hampton, practised there for several years until his death at the age of 40. His son Edward, likewise a physician, practised at Fishkill, N. Y. Dr. Silas Halsey, a native of Southampton, also practised locally from 1764 up to the Revolution when he removed to Seneca County to become its first physician and a prominent statesman.

An East Hampton town record of March 24, 1761, states: "Agreed to pay Dr. Elihu Howell £4 10d for curing Elisha Wicks' hand when he shot it." Other East Hampton physicians of that era were Samuel Hutchinson, a native of Southold, who died in 1790 at the age of 57; Ebenezer Sage, Yale 1778, Congressman from Suffolk County from 1809 to 1817, who later lived at Sag Harbor; Aaron T. Gardner and Nathaniel Gardner, 1756 to 1804.

To again quote Mrs. Edwards: "Dr. Henry White, who was a doctor in Southampton at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, left an account book which is still in existence, and

some of the entries are very interesting. A visit, with paregoric, cost Squire Harrick, a near neighbor, 2 shillings; for three visits, with spirits of nitre, he charged 3s 6d. A visit to Wickapogue in the night with castor oil and paregoric, was 10s. His fee for extracting a tooth was 1s. A purge was 1s 4d, an emetic the same. A visit to North Sea with bleeding thrown in was 4s."

According to Dr. Frank Overton, one time historian of the Suffolk County Medical Society: "The first practicing physician in Suffolk County of whom we have a record was the Rev. Joshua Hobart, second pastor of the Southold Presbyterian Church," who served in that capacity from 1674 to 1717. For more than four decades Pastor Hobart ministered to the bodily as well as the spiritual ailments of the people of his town, and following his death the town placed a large stone slab above his grave in the old churchyard bearing an inscription which read in part: "He was a faithful minister, a skillful physician, a general scholar, a courageous patriot, and to crown it all, an eminent Christian." Included also, according to Whitaker's History of Southold, were the lines:

"No more his healing hand shall health restore;  
Elude the grave and baffle death no more."

Unfortunately, the inscription was cast in lead and was appropriated, probably for ammunition, during the Revolution.

In the old cemetery at Cutchogue, a few miles from Southold, may be seen the gravestone of Dr. Thomas Paine who, following graduation from Yale in 1748, served the Cutchogue parish from 1750 to 1766. His inscription reads:

"In memory of Ye Rev. Mr. Thomas Paine, late pastor  
in this place, who lived desired by many (a distinguished  
Preacher of Righteousness and a successful healer of the sick)  
and died lamented by Most on the 15th of Oct. 1766, in ye 43d  
year of his age.

"Oh, cruel death, why didst thou take so quick  
That Guide of souls and Healer of ye sick?  
Not Death but God the Author of ye Breach  
Thereby to give such useful men doth teach."

Dr. John Barber, a Yale classmate of Dr. Paine and who in 1782 completed a medical course at Dartmouth, preached and practiced at Mattituck and Aquebogue during the latter part of the 18th century.

Before and during the Revolutionary period, Huntington Town had a number of physicians, graduate and otherwise, including Benjamin Y. Prime, Gilbert Smith, James Sanford, Daniel Wiggins, Zophar Platt and Oliver Brown. Of another Huntington practitioner whose life extended from 1769 to 1828, Romanah Sammis, Huntington Town Historian, wrote: "It is probable that Moses Blachly qualified as a physician after the study of books on the subject of medicine and work with some experienced physician, as this was an early custom." Blachly, be it known, was also postmaster and town clerk.



But by far Huntington's best known physician of the Revolution was Dr. Gilbert Potter who, following the outbreak of hostilities on Long Island in 1776, joined Washington's forces as a surgeon, leaving his wife, Elizabeth Williams Potter, to attend to his Huntington patients. This she did between sessions of the private school which she operated in her home. Later, when the British arrived and established a military hospital, Elizabeth Potter assumed the role of visiting nurse, ministering to friend and foe with equal care. It was in the pest house which the British set up for contagious cases that she performed her most heroic tasks. Here among the smallpox sufferers she found a young English ensign, who had been removed from a



*Southside Hospital, Bay Shore*

British warship in Huntington Harbor. Her constant care alone saved his life and during convalescence she had him taken to her home for further attention.

Years later, during the War of 1812, Sir Admiral Hardy, commanding a British fleet in Gardiner's Bay at the easterly end of Long Island, found among the American prisoners one Henry Williams who, upon questioning, proved to be the nephew of Hardy's benefactress of Revolutionary days when the Admiral was a very sick young ensign. Needless to say, Williams was released and returned to his Huntington home.

Among Suffolk County's other medical men of the colonial era were Richard Udall of Islip, Joshua Clark of Southold, Jonathan Havens and Zephaniah Platt of Smithtown, and in Brookhaven Town, Dr. Reed, George Muirson, Benjamin Smith, Samuel Thompson, and Cyrus Penderson, who had studied with Dr. Muirson, married his daughter and served during the Revolution. Samuel Thompson, the father of Benjamin F. Thompson, Island historian, was not only Setauket's village physician prior to the Revolution, but during the war he became a captain of the First Company in Col. Floyd's Long Island Regiment.

Although better known today for his achievements as a historian, son Benjamin also became a physician after studying at Clinton and

Huntington academies, briefly at Yale and Columbia and for a time with Dr. Ebenezer Sage at Sag Harbor. Following ten years of practice at Setauket, however, he turned to law and attained a greater success in that field. While still a physician Benjamin Thompson, according to Kate W. Strong, Setauket historian, shared his home there with a young medical aspirant, Joel Griffing by name, whom he charged \$7.81 for three months' "use of bed, furniture and wash-room," \$3 for a year's use of Thompson's library and an equal sum for the privilege of reading the Doctor's Shakespeare.

Joel Griffing launched forth as a doctor on his own in 1817 and thereafter received 50 cents for an office call and 75 cents for a home visit. For a night call lasting two hours he charged \$1.85, for dressing a cut finger 25 cents, and for extracting a tooth 37½ cents. A more munificent fee was \$5 for setting a broken leg, while for attending one Oakley Clark on the south side of the island, which entailed a 21-mile drive, his charge was \$6. Dr. Griffing left Setauket in 1820 to start anew at Guilford, Connecticut, where he died five years later.

A respected Long Island physician of a much earlier era was Dr. A. Rodman of Flushing whose skill and knowledge, attained in his native Germany, were such as to bring patients to him from all parts of the island. In 1709 he was called upon to treat, by correspondence, Col. William Smith, a prominent resident of Suffolk, whom he advised to take a concoction consisting of a half an ounce of nutmeg, cloves, mace and cinnamon beaten together and mixed with two quarts of rum.

Some years before Dr. Rodman, a number of Flushing's leading residents depended for medical advice and attendance upon Dr. Simon Cooper of Oyster Bay among whose patients was John Bowne, Quaker preacher, whose homestead still stands in Flushing as a public shrine. Dr. Cooper was one of his town's earliest settlers and by the time of his death in 1691 had become one of its largest landowners. Cooper's Bluff overlooking Oyster Bay harbor is named for him.

In Cooper's and Rodman's day obstetrics was not a matter for the family doctor but rather for duly recognized midwives and women neighbors. No Long Island community before 1750 was without its midwife. They were a very busy lot and were held in high esteem. Elizabeth King of Southold, before her death at 81, is said to have helped with more than a thousand births. Catnip, motherwort, horehound and boneset comprised the midwife's materia medica, but far more important were her experience and common sense.

What with midwives and, for ordinary ills, one's own assortment of homemade remedies, the doctor was called mostly for the more serious diseases and for bodily injuries, which, it seems, were of common occurrence among the hard-toiling colonists of Long Island. Poor roads and sidepaths, crudely built platforms and boat landings, unlighted streets, homemade tools and implements, the common use of guns, all contributed to accidents. Even a minor wound from a "muzzle-loader" could be serious. Onderdonk's "Revolutionary Incidents" tells of the wounding at Rockville Centre in 1776 of one George Smith who "was attended by Dr. James Searing from June 22 to 29, whose charge for dressing the wound, bleeding, basilicon



ointment, a plaster, cathartics, ivory tube to suck out the blood, and nine visits was £1.17.6". In this case, "he recovered from the wound." Not so fortunate was Daniel B. Swezey, a sturdy Yaphank farmer in his thirty-third year, who "died from a broken leg."

In spite of accidents, however, and a dearth of professionally trained doctors, a goodly proportion of the Long Island colonists lived to a ripe old age. Writing in the Long Island Forum of Huntington's Presbyterian minister from 1793 to 1817, Dr. E. J. Humeston, Huntington Historian, states: "Of 564 persons buried by Mr. Schenk in 25 years, 133, or 21.8 per cent, had passed the age of seventy; 46



*Nurses' Home, Southside Hospital, Bay Shore*

were eighty or more; 13 were over ninety; and 2 were said to have been 104."

It can be readily seen that during the period from 1607 to the conclusion of the Revolution and the establishment of the United States much knowledge had been gained along medical lines. Some of our physicians had gone abroad and studied in European schools and enough knowledge had been gained to put medicine on a sound basis.

Most of the men now devoting themselves to the practice were of honest intent and, as before stated, the charlatan was looked upon with disfavor. As a result of this feeling the legislature at Albany in 1796 passed a law making it a misdemeanor for anyone to practice medicine and chirurgery without registration with the state of New York. In order to be qualified to register, a physician had to show that he had practiced a certain number of years, or to be certified by a qualified physician with whom he had practiced, as to his ability. This was definitely in accord with the wishes of the sincere men practicing at that time.

It was probably as a direct result of this enactment that the first county medical society was formed in Westchester in 1797. The

history of this society has been preserved as far as possible where the early records could be obtained.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Suffolk County would soon organize a society of its own, being as close to Westchester as it is and so in 1806 a society was formed on July 22.

Nassau County was early associated with the County of Queens and so its earliest society was the Queens-Nassau Medical Society. It was not until 1921 that Nassau formed its own county society and this has rapidly developed into one of the most outstanding in the country.

Although the Suffolk County Medical Society was founded July 22, 1806, the minutes of its meetings up to 1854 were not preserved. Its first officers were: David Conklin of Riverhead, president; John Howard, vice president; Moses Blachly, secretary; David Woodhull, treasurer; John Howard, Moses Blachly and Oliver Brown, censors; John Gardiner of Southold, a native of Cutchogue, delegate to the New York Medical Society.

The chief function of the county society during its earliest years, it seems, was to pass on the qualifications of applicants to practice medicine, but only one license so issued before 1854 has come to light. Printed on parchment, which would suggest that a number of these forms were on hand, this license, duly filled in and signed, was issued in 1807 to Dr. Nathaniel Miller, a native of East Hampton, who practiced in Brookhaven up to his death in 1863 and who himself was president of the Society in 1832. The secretary at that time was Joshua Fanning.

Only since 1870 have the minutes of the society been regularly kept and preserved. These minutes, during the 1870's and '80's, show a new interest by physicians generally and from them may be traced the progressive developments of modern medicine over these formative years. Declared Dr. Frank Overton, writing for the "Long Island Forum" 1940:

"For over a quarter of a century the Suffolk County Medical Society has practiced administrative medicine by advising official bodies and welfare organizations regarding their duties to the sick and to the community in the care and the prevention of disease. The success of this leadership is plainly evident along at least six lines:

"1. Medical Centers. Making each public hospital a medical center for the post-graduate education of the physicians of the community.

"2. The Tuberculosis Hospital. The establishment of the County Tuberculosis Hospital in 1916 after a campaign of education beginning in 1912, and conducted almost entirely by the Medical Society.

"3. Public Health. The enactment of the Public Health law of 1914 reorganizing the State Health Department on a modern basis was the result of the promotion of the plan by the Suffolk County Medical Society, whose influence was a deciding factor in convincing the legislators of the need for the law.



“4. County Health Department. One of the most important features of the law of 1914 was the establishment of a system of Deputy State Health Officers for local public health work, in which Suffolk and Nassau counties constituted one district. The system enabled any community on Long Island to obtain the benefits of all the resources of the State Department of Health on a few hours' notice. The system was expanded later to centralize local health departments under a County Health unit.

“5. The Monthly News Letter. An outstanding activity of the Suffolk County Medical Society is the publication of a Monthly News Letter, of eight pages, containing news of all public health activities in the County. It is published at the expense of the Medical Society, and copies are sent free to a selected list of over five hundred prominent citizens. This is one of the pioneer publications of its kind in New York State.

“6. Welfare and Relief. The Suffolk County Medical Society is now actively engaged in solving the nation-wide problem of relief and welfare, particularly in regard to sickness. For ten years the Society has had a committee to audit the bills submitted by physicians for their services to the poor. The system is recognized as essential in maintaining a high standard of medical services, and a reasonable remuneration to the physicians.”

The foregoing paragraphs, it must be understood, were written during the nation-wide depression which preceded World War Two. But quite as appropriate today as then are Dr. Overton's further words: “In all matters relating to sickness and health it (the Society) is the leader, the public adviser, and the authority in whom the people of the county are placing their confidence.”

Thus it can readily be seen that in all medical advances Long Island takes an active part.

Owing to a closer and closer association of physicians in the counties whose village boundaries were rapidly nearing each other it was felt that a closer cooperation of physicians in Kings, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk was desirable to further the knowledge and advancement of medicine. As a result, the Associated Physicians of Long Island was formed and is still in existence today.

Long Island has, since early colonial times, been associated with all the advances in medical science. From the few practicing physicians of colonial times the number now totals some 4000 on Long Island and the incidence of illness is nowhere better controlled or the ill no better cared for than they are here.

Hospitals have been and are being erected at strategic points and constant improvement in all branches of medical care is noted.

Keeping always abreast with the times the medical societies are constantly placing themselves in the front rank of those organizations furthering Public Health and Preventative Medicine. The role of these two branches of medical science assumes a more and more important position as time goes on and although a Utopia has not yet been realized, we feel that the day is not far off when maximum care for the ill, aged and infirm will have been attained on Long Island.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### *The Fisheries of Long Island*

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EARLY and balanced personal use of marine products by the aboriginals was followed by rapid development of fisheries for commercial uses by the replacement settlers. This commercial use, or, better, misuse, inevitably led to depletion. Depletion demanded improved gear or larger boats and resulted in greater depletion over a wider area. This secondary loss in profits by the industry caused many of the persons engaged in fisheries enterprises to seek other employment. The decreased fishing load which resulted afforded an opportunity for partial recovery of numbers among a few species.

The present page in fisheries history is one of a formulated plan whereby the "catch" or "take" is controlled to maintain an adequate breeding stock. This control is based upon detailed and exact scientific information and adequate legislation covering each kind of fish involved. Since many of the species migrate from one area to another, interstate legislation is mandatory.

Scientific information needed in the search for methods of maintaining adequate numbers of fishes includes careful research of varied types. Among these must be included studies of age and growth, food habits, breeding habits, migrations, enemies and parasites, and particular preferences as to places in which each species of fish lives.

The fisheries history of Nassau and Suffolk Counties of Long Island indicates the general sequence of events listed above. In fact, the only real departure from the same picture the world over is the last one. Here conservation is offered as a check against any additional decline in numbers of "vanishing American" fish. The conservation view had its origin largely in Europe, has only recently been adopted in the United States and is almost totally lacking in Oriental nations. Nations and states, counties and villages prosper in the exact degree that they learn to balance "use" with "maintenance" of any natural resource.

The strain of modern life with its continual "war of nerves" has created unusual recreational demands on our local fisheries. "Getting away from it all" by a week end of fishing or a fishing vacation is big business in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. This recreational demand has led to the establishment of fish hatcheries, has demanded protective legislation for sports interests and has caused the formation of local sportsmen's clubs to maintain sports fishing at its maximum peak.

Along with the historical sequence of events, there have been developments in keeping with the changing fisheries. Among these are manifold new uses for fisheries products, and more efficient pack-



aging and handling of fish through refrigeration and rapid truck transportation. Sports fishing gear have undergone remarkable transformations. Fishing craft are now equipped with underseas detection devices for schools of fish. Barometers and special lures together with improved craft offer a contrasting picture with the devices, gear and craft in use for sports fishing fifty years ago.

The centering of unusually large populations within the limits of Long Island has concentrated fisheries management problems. The problems of pollution by human wastes and by poultry farms, in addition to other causes of decline of fisheries, are critical to this congested area. Chemical pollution, prevalent in other adjacent areas, has lately arrived as a potential menace to the persisting fisheries in ocean waters.

The Long Island fishing fleet during World War II served in two valiant capacities. As soon as war was declared, large numbers of the larger boats were taken over and manned for the national defense of our thousands of miles of coastline. The rescues effected and the services rendered belong to other pages of history. Secondly, the remaining fleet provided protein foods to replace those other types which had to be diverted to feed the fighting forces throughout the world. A fisherman can produce more protein food than a farmer can per unit of time and effort. Plagued by lack of help, wartime equipment, inadequate netting, submerged obstacles and restrictions on navigation and fuel, the fishermen did a wonderful job. They prospered financially too, and the present fleet of fishing craft is the most efficient in fisheries history.

#### THE ABORIGINAL FISHERMAN

The use of fisheries products as food by the aboriginals is best described as personal, casual, and incidental. The number of these primitive people was nowhere abundant. Disease, starvation and continuous warfare maintained almost static populations. The villages were small and widely distributed in the areas where fishing, hunting and patch farming was best; that is, easiest.

Large oyster-shell motunds containing Indian tools and weapons together with the bones of native wild animals and fish testify as to the diet of the original Long Islanders. Small patches of corn were maintained probably for the purpose of altering the strictly protein diet of fish and shell fish and more fish.

The Indian fishermen used spears and arrows for fishing and also employed weirs or fish traps (barriers) made of branches. These weirs were placed on mud flats and they impounded fish when the tide went down. Bone fish hooks were also used. Oysters were taken by pounding them off rocks and logs with a stone hammer. Clams and scallops were pulled out of the mud flats at low tide. Such fishing, without commercial interests, had little effect on the total population of sea life. All of the accounts of the period testify as to the teeming "inexhaustible" supply of natural resources of the sea, the land, and the air.

The early Long Island settlers found this a land of fish and game if not one of milk and honey. This bountiful supply was to persist generally until the period following the Civil War. It was not until 1910 that the first echoes of a new idea, conservation, were being heard and urged upon the nation as a protection for rapidly declining natural resources.

#### GENERAL FEATURES OF LONG ISLAND FISHERIES

Long Island comprises an area of approximately 1900 square miles which affords good life to about five million people. The irregular coast line of Long Island is equal to the distance between New York City and Charleston, South Carolina. In form it assumes a giant fish "with the blunt head at New York Bay and the two flukes of its tail stretching to Orient and Montauk Points". The broad continental shelf continues to the south and east of Long Island. This is a submerged, gradually sloping plain, thirty to one hundred miles broad, extending from Cape Hatteras beyond Cape Cod. At depths of about five hundred feet this slope drops off abruptly to as much as twenty-five hundred feet. Over this continental slope fish migrate to and from the inshore waters and between Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras. Weakfish, porgies, mackerel, and fluke remain in the inshore waters during the summer months, but with the approach of winter migrate to the warmer offshore and southern waters. Winter flounders and cod move northward with the approach of spring since these fish favor waters of lower temperature.

Long Island with its numerous bays and shallow waters affords shelter and food for migrating fish. Behind the narrow strips of sand beaches and protected from the storms of the Atlantic Ocean, fishermen may ply their trade or hobby in safety. On the north shore deep fiords usually yield good catches.

Farming undoubtedly was the major occupation of the early settlers of Long Island, but with the bounteous supply of salt-water fish, mollusca and crustacea, many farmers collected and sold their catch to an ever increasing population. Even President Washington, we are told, chartered a Long Island boat for a fishing trip to the Sandy Hook banks. Long before 1850, before the building of a factory at Greenport, menhaden were collected for their high oil content which was used in tanning and in the manufacture of paint. Today millions of pounds of menhaden are caught annually and turned into oil and fish meal.

The whale industry disappeared about 1880, but the evidences of its importance remain in the museum at Sag Harbor. As the number of whales grew smaller in the inshore waters, men built larger and heavier boats to pursue them in the deep offshore waters. At one time more than sixty whaling boats operated from Sag Harbor.

During the early days Montauk Point and Gardiners Bay waters were well established as fishing centers. Many of these fishermen were from strange ports, visiting only for the period necessary to land a profitable load. Catches were sailed by cargo boats directly to New York City. Not until 1844 was the railroad extended to Greenport, and to Montauk in 1895.



As the railroads became extended and improved, more and more people from the congested areas west of Long Island appropriated the unspoiled forests and waters toward the east. By 1900 Long Island had become a commercial fisheries area of importance and along with it evolved the sport and recreational fisheries. The Long Island Rail Road, through cheap but efficient transportation, stimulated the growth of urban centers and the enjoyment of native wild-life resources. The scientists of the New York State Conservation Department have studied the salt and fresh waters of Long Island in order not only to conserve but to increase their fish populations. Through continual studies on pollution and contamination they also serve as guardians of the health of Long Islanders.



*Bunker Fishing in Peconic Bay*

While cruising along the inland bays or offshore waters of Long Island one frequently meets commercial fishing boats of various kinds and one may notice the exposed poles of the pound nets. These pound nets are devised to deflect fish migrations in the inshore waters toward deeper waters along a leader net until they enter the pocket of the net and are trapped. In ocean pound nets, these leader nets may be two hundred feet long and the poles which support the leader and pocket may be from seventy to ninety feet long. These ocean pound nets may represent an investment of about \$10,000 each. Motor vessels and storms continually damage the equipment. The efficiency of the pound net brings to its owner a wide variety of forms of fish such as butterfish, mackerel, porgy, weakfish, whiting, tuna, striped bass, bluefish, bonita and many others. Huge numbers of squid are also collected and sold to the sport fishermen. Its efficiency is sometimes a disadvantage to the operator, especially when he must labor in throwing back trash fish like ling, skates and dogfish.

To overcome the dependency of the pound net on the chance migrations of fish and to allow the fisherman to follow schooling fish along their migratory route, he invented another commercial gear known as the otter trawl. The otter trawl is a long cone-shaped net that is towed by a motor-powered vessel. The mouth of the net is

kept open by the force of the water against properly placed boards. By weighting the bottom of the mouth of the net, the otter trawl will drag close to the ocean floor and catch, for example, fluke and flounders, or it may be towed at higher speed without weights and collect fast-moving fishes like porgies, whiting and butterfish. One of the adverse features of the otter trawl is that it catches all sizes of fish, including many small and useless ones. The motion of the boat causes the death of many small fish which are packed against the bag of the net. Some control of the catch is possible by increasing or decreasing the size of the mesh so that only fish above a certain size are retained.

Another net that is used a great deal is the gill net which is suspended vertically. Its meshes allow the heads of the fish to pass but catch in the gills when the fish seeks to get away. They may be anchored or staked, but the more efficient ones are from eight hundred to twelve hundred feet long and are set to drift in the open offshore waters. Weakfish, bluefish and mackerel catches are important. In addition to the various nets mentioned, such nets as haul-seines, purse-seines, Fyke nets and trammel nets are used on a smaller scale and at special times. For example, purse-seines are used primarily to catch the enormous numbers of schooling menhaden.

For the year 1938 it is estimated that the total commercial catch for Long Island of marine fishes was 50,000,000 pounds, with a wholesale value of about \$900,000. 1938 is known to have been a poor season and from this we can appreciate that marine fisheries are directly tied in with the economic health of Long Island. Most of the fish are shipped to the Fulton Market in New York City by truck. The market dealer's commission, we understand, is 12.5 per cent of the sale price. The total marketing expense is borne by the fisherman. The commission, container charges, freight charges, Commercial Fishermen's Association tax, is deducted from the sale price and the balance is sent to the fishermen. The prices of fish apparently change almost hourly, consequently the fisherman does not realize the value of his catch until he receives payment from his dealer in the Fulton Market.

The sport fisherman may indulge in various forms of angling, such as deep-sea fishing, bay fishing, big game fishing, surf-casting, and dock and bank fishing. The sport of surf-casting is difficult and persons may struggle with the surf many years for their first striped bass. Striped bass runs are most prominent during the spring and fall days. At these times the beaches around Rockaway, Jones State Park, Fire Island, Moriches Inlet and Montauk are active with surf fishermen. Occasionally, weakfish and bluefish are hooked to the great delight of the angler. Very many anglers fish from the banks of channels, from bridges, and docks. This is probably the cheapest yet a very enjoyable recreation. Most bridges are high and landing a hooked fish causes much excitement and personal stimulation.

The folks with money to spend may decide to charter a small power boat, or join a large group on an "open" boat, or hire a



rowboat. A large number of private power boats of many sorts are available for parties of two to eight people. These boats are available for bay fishing for weakfish, porgies, flukes, flounders, etc., as well as for sea fishing for big game fish like tuna, marlin, and broadbill swordfish. These chartered boats at favorite times are used for trolling for bluefish and striped bass. A chartered boat may cost from \$50 upward per day depending on the location and fishing desired, and the food expected.



(From a watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis)

*Boats at Greenport*

On Long Island there are said to be some 200 open boats, so called because they are open to anyone who has the price of the fare. These boats usually are large enough to carry, by crowding, more than 100 persons. These people are interested mostly in deep-sea angling for sea bass, porgies, codfish, blackfish and whiting, as well as for flounders and flukes in the bays. Sheepshead Bay, Canarsie, Freeport, Babylon, and Montauk are popular mooring places for these craft.

The rowboat still is preferred by many anglers probably because of the low rental and greater opportunities for independence. Some of the rowboat hosts tow their fishermen to and from the recommended location so that even the neophyte may be happy. On the north and south shore and in Peconic Bays, rowboat fishermen may make interesting catches of flounders, flukes, weakfish, kingfish, and occasionally small bluefish and blackfish.



Incidentally, the bait business has grown into a large-scale business. To serve all these fishermen great numbers of sandworms, bloodworms, shrimp, squid, clams, killies and crabs must be collected. Most of the Long Island worms are shipped in from Maine. Various species of shrimp are much in demand for "chumming" from the stern of a boat after weakfish. According to the New York State Conservation Law in Relation to Fish and Game, 1938, shrimp may not be collected in the spring before May 15. The skimmer clam, quahog, and soft clam as well as squid are important baits for the angler, squid being preferred for weakfish and striped bass. Killies are used mostly for fluke fishing. One species of killies may live for some time out of water and consequently these are in great demand.

The reader may well believe now that the tackle business also is a large scale proposition. Tackle gear for salt-water fishing is of great variety and quite expensive. Sea water may not corrode it, and it is specific in its use. The big game fisherman, the surf fisherman, the bay fisherman, each has his specific needs.

Fresh-water fishing on Long Island is rather limited. With a relatively low elevation sloping gently to the sea, streams are generally short and flow slowly, and may be subjected to tidal action. Numerous lakes and ponds occur in the glacial deposits. Rain is absorbed quickly by the ground which builds up a large spring-water supply for the numerous trout streams. Brook and brown trout, largemouth and small-mouth bass, pickerel, yellow perch, and crappies are not very common in streams and ponds. On the whole, fresh-water fishing is light, no doubt because ponds and streams are of small size and because spring water is relatively sterile of the necessary food organisms. However, Long Islanders are fortunate for a number of reasons, particularly because they have access to fresh fish and shellfish. Products of the sea are rich in minerals which the body needs to develop properly and to perform its functions. Calcium and phosphorus for bones and teeth, iodine for the thyroid gland, iron and copper for blood, all the vitamins for greatest efficiency, proteins, carbohydrates and lipids for energy and tissue building.

Not many years ago everyone took for granted that the natural resources of our country were inexhaustible and demanded in taking what he believed was his share. Now we realize how false and selfish this opinion is. The sportsman receives pleasure and profit from fishing and hunting and inspiration and help from a life in contact with nature. He slowly comes to realize the imperative need to protect all of our natural resources.

#### FISHERIES DEPLETION AND RESTORATION

The steady decline in the commercial catch of some fish is of striking magnitude. In others the catch is increasing, due in large measure to more scientific fishing. The causes for these changes offer a page of unusual interest in the fisheries history of the Island.



*Chart showing fisheries production of several commercial species for State of New York.*

Fish	Highest Annual Yield 1880-1897	Annual Yield 1921-1938
Weakfish .....	2,500,000	1,100,000
Striped Bass.....	200,000	120,000
Porgy .....	350,000	1,400,000
Butterfish .....	400,000	2,800,000
Sea Bass .....	700,000	500,000
Fluke .....	no data	declining
Other species .....	no data	no data

There are several features that may obscure the data dealing with the relative abundance of any particular kind of fish. Among these are: (1) annual natural fluctuations due to differences in numbers of young raised, (2) differences in the intensity of fishing, (3) change in gear used in fishing, and (4) change in type of fishing as in concentration on certain less desirable species when the fishing for the more desirable species declines. Depletion then can be determined only with completely accurate figures on the catch. These figures are wanting in most instances and little trust can be placed on most of the figures being compiled by the Federal Government today. In recent years the fishermen generally withheld information in order to conceal profits subject to taxation.

The decline in fisheries yield for any given kind of fish may be due to several reasons. First, young fish or eggs may be killed on the spawning grounds by unseasonable storms. Frequently new inlets are created by such storms and the degree of salinity changed in the bays. Such events are classified as natural reasons for declines in abundance of fish. Second, incorrect fishing in which insufficient numbers of fish are left to maintain the species is a big factor in decreases in catch. An example of this is furnished by the shad which are caught on the annual spawning run. Third, many of the fish entering into commercial catches migrate from other areas and anything deflecting such migrations will be reflected in the total catch. Such changes are known to occur due to the changes in direction of ocean currents causing changes in water temperatures. Sea-going fish which migrate into fresh water to spawn are stopped in their migrations by dams or other barriers in the water courses. Fourth, pollution produces very disastrous effects upon a fishery. These effects occur in two directions. One effect is to produce an environment in which the fish cannot live. Another effect is to make the environment unsafe since disease-producing bacteria can be transmitted to man through the agency of fish. This last condition is the one that so vitally involves the shellfish and oyster industry.

Each of the foregoing has played a part in the history of Long Island's fisheries. There is little that can be done to forestall natural fluctuation in numbers of any one kind of fish or in natural changes

of migration routes. These changes ordinarily are corrected sooner or later by other natural forces. Pollution and incorrect fishing, the human factors in fishery abundance, are more difficult to correct. The manner in which certain areas have been improved, as well as the methods of definitely increasing fish production, offer a glimpse at the possible future paths.

The shad catches in the Hudson River-Long Island Sound area illustrate what can be accomplished with a fisheries under proper management. The drop in production for all rivers on the Atlantic Coast which produce shad during the period 1896 to 1908 was from 50 to 26 million pounds. In twelve years the catch dropped about fifty per cent. In 1940 the total catch was only 10 million pounds. This data is not entirely free of errors as many catches remain wholly unreported but it is indicative of the general trend.

In the Hudson River the annual catch has been increased since 1935 by restricting the number of spawning fish that may be taken. Briefly, the plan is to give an adequate supply of fish an opportunity to spawn. In every other section of the country where shad occur the population continues to dwindle seriously.

Therefore, the steps to be taken in the correction of a fisheries decrease are: (1) scientific investigations to determine what stages in the life of a fish are most vulnerable to outside effects, and (2) legislation to correct the causes underlying the decrease if they are created by acts of man. Here there may be need for restrictions on size of fish, time to take, on type of gear or on its size, on method of taking or by even limiting the number of persons engaged in the taking of the fish. Also, patrol facilities by enforcement personnel are equally as important as the other two features. Too frequently this phase of the work has been politically charged. Recent advances in transportation such as the helicopters and seaplanes offer the most feasible patrol facilities.

The story of whaling and that of the Island's shellfisheries are covered in other chapters.

#### FISHERIES PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Within the past twenty years the growing need for an interstate and an international program on fisheries has been recognized more and more. The Federal Government is responsible for the international aspects of the problem. Its assignment or assumption of the interstate problems is open to many serious objections.

Very favorable progress has been recently made in the solution of interstate problems by an interstate organization known as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Uniform laws, standard size limits, investigations of special problems, assignments of special problems, pollution abatement programs and the manifold related endeavors, have all been considered by the Commission. A recent proposal for an offshore chemical dumpage program off Freeport, Long Island, was investigated and considered at length by the Commission. This approach offers solutions for many of the fishery



problems. It consists of obtaining scientific facts, applying these to the case in question and in obtaining interstate compliance through encouragement of uniform legislation.

Another method of fisheries regulation which is receiving increased attention is the one now practiced in Maryland, where the number of persons who can engage in the fisheries is limited. Such legislation limiting the number of fishermen is a far day removed from the individual enterprise day in our national thought. However, such enterprise is limited in other fields such as in factories requiring union membership. Possibly the Maryland plan is a step towards a state-operated union. Whatever its adverse features may appear to be it seemingly is one real answer to many of our fishery problems where the size of the catch must be controlled so as to provide an adequate breeding stock.

Maine has the unusual law, demonstrable as the only practical one, of requiring that the largest lobsters as well as the smallest must be returned to the water. This is a rare type of restricted legislation. It has led to a most remarkable increase in the number of lobsters in Maine waters. Doubtless it has far wider possibilities on other fisheries than is now practiced.

In a large measure nothing has changed in our waters with the exception of localized pollution. Those basic conditions which produced the tremendous numbers of fish in the days of the early settlers still exist. The one obstacle to the progressive return of increased fisheries is a planned program of management whereby man can adequately regulate the take. As is usual in progressive steps, man's stupidity, selfishness, and ignorance erect barriers along the way.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### *Long Island Poets and Painters*

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THERE is a first principle in aesthetics, long familiar to historians yet frequently forgotten by critics, that art is dependent upon locale for its substance. For a work of art to assume masterful proportions it is necessary that the artist conceive his piece sensually, then project it in real terms. Both the conception and the projection derive from actual sights, sounds and colors, people, places and things—in a word, from the artist's entire environment. In the finest art forms even that which is most ethereal is earth-bound. Because of the truth of these notions it is usually said that a certain physical place, with all of its significant associations, is productive of an artist's creations.

Some locales tend to inspire more than do others. The location may present more natural beauty. People who dwell there may offer more interest and variety. The folklore, legends, local traditions and historical connections may be more abundant. The kind of fertile background so necessary to the productive artist must have all or most of these qualities. Long Island offers such a background, and has, therefore, always been able to provide the artist with substantiating locale. The land and its waters, the variety of its people, the unusual occupations, the rich fullness of its lore have nourished many poets and painters. And, in return, the Island has been celebrated by them. For this reason the present chapter might have been called "Long Island in Words and Paint".

One studying the history of the finer arts on the Island is readily assured that the poets and painters have been impressed by the locale. Most of them have possessed a sense of awareness which has prohibited their seclusion in towers of ivory. They seemed, generally, to compose not out of mind but out of surroundings. Their culture, therefore, seems to have been a natural rather than an artificial one. They possessed a common consciousness of the "matter" of Long Island. Paradoxically, however, if their art forms were Island inspired, their work was not artistically insular. For the culture which the Island produced, and which was produced on the Island, has ramified in many directions and to distant places.

In examining the arts on Long Island the historian uses the same principles of selection which he would use in studying the art of any other country or area of that country. Some artists are cited because of purely historical interests; they happened to be "firsts". Others are important because they were typical, or "genre" writers. A part of them are mentioned because they were in the tradition of the country and the times, another part because they were individual-



istically out of the main stream of culture. Many of them the historian finds significant because, while small and only relatively important, they brought art to their area; a few of them he remembers because, large and objectively important, as native sons they brought Long Island art to the attention of the world.

The early days of Long Island history bring to light two poets who vie for the distinctive position of first literary artist in the region. The earliest known verse seems to have been written by a Dutchman, one Jacob Steendam, whose *Complaint of New Amsterdam* tells in mournful tones (and somewhat mournful metres) of the troubles between the Hollanders and the British in 1652. Following this political diatribe in doggerel, appears the work of the Englishman, Richard Steere—purportedly the first in native tongue to be produced on the Island. Born in England, Steere lived the last part of his life in Southold. Between the years 1680 and 1713 he versified some historical events of unusual interest. One of his titles is a remarkable example of the quaint wordiness of the period: "A Monumental Memorial of Marine Mercy, being an acknowledgment of an High Hand of Divine Deliverance on the Deep in Time of distress in a late voyage from Boston, in New England, to London, anno 1683. In a poem by R. Steere. To which is added another, occasioned by Several Remarkable Passages happening at the Birth of a male child on Board the Same Ship in her voyage Returning 1684, by the same author." Another of Steere's extant works tells, quite typically, about the *Life of Daniel* in ninety-two pages of strained but highly descriptive verse.

A third historic "first" is found in the poetry of a certain Jupiter Hammon, first Negro poet in the country. His work, produced around 1760 on Lloyd's Neck near Huntington where Hammon was attached as a slave to the old Lloyd family, pre-dates by a few years that of Phyllis Wheatley, great Negress and poetess of New England. In Hammon's *An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries* we find a rhymed and metred broadside which sometimes resembles scriptural lamentations in the style of the early Puritan Divines, sometimes the preciousness of the Seventeenth Century Metaphysical poets. The Bible and the Hymnal seem to be his sources of education in general as well as of subject matter and style. His charming *Poem for Children, With a Thought on Death* shows a simple mind and a deep faith in poignant, sincere, ballad-like lines. In them Long Island can claim the beginning of a distinguished tradition of American Negro poetry.

The first successful American opera was also a first for the Setauket writer, Micah Hawkins, whose family line has played and still plays an historically important part in the history of the locale. His *Sawmill, or a Yankee Trick* was produced in 1824. The plot is happily slapstick, the characters typically buffoon, and the songs rather good patter in the manner of John Gay. Two copies of the original libretto are still in existence. Unfortunately, however, the music and stage notes have disappeared.



Micah Hawkins began the tradition of Long Island singers of song; but he never achieved the universality and longevity of Payne, Bland and Penn. John Howard Payne was born in East Hampton, in 1791. As a young man he moved to England where, because of his theatrical talents, he early established Drury Lane connections. His first success was an operetta produced at Covent Garden, May 8, 1823, entitled, after the name of the author's beloved cousin who died on Long Island as a young girl, *Clari, Maid of Milan*. The work as a whole has long since faded from memory, but a certain aria



*"Home, Sweet Home" at East Hampton, Which Inspired the Famous Song of that Name by John Howard Payne*

seems to have evaded forgetfulness—the lovely *Home, Sweet Home*. This song was written in France where, poverty stricken and longing for friends and home-town associations, the author was reminded by a group of singing children of his own happy childhood days in East Hampton. The tune, based on an old Italian folk-air, was instantly popular, and has ever remained so. That Payne had had his early homestead in mind when composing the words is fairly certain, as can be noted in a letter he wrote to his brother sometime after *Clari's* production:

It is nearly twenty years since I left my native country. I left it full of hope, with youthful faith, some resources and every encouragement to anticipate fortune and distinction. The twenty years of absence have only been prolific in experience. If my resources are diminished my value for wealth has diminished with them. If I have gained no renown, I have gained what is better, a disregard for the sort of renown of which I was in ardent pursuit; if I go back to the home of my ancestors almost like a prodigal, I go with the certainty of a prodigal's welcome and with the treasure of a prodigal's wisdom.



The United State Government thought enough of this prodigal to move his body from Tunis, where he died, to Oak Hill Cemetery in Rock Creek Park, Washington, in 1883, while the Old Homestead at East Hampton, so dear to the composer and intimate with the song, has become a national shrine.

James A. Bland, born October 22, 1854 in Flushing, was the second of the famous Island composers. The compositions of this Negro balladeer and minstrel, *Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny* and *Dem Golden Slippers*, have become American art songs, precipitating the author's quick rise to fame, and endearing him to lovers of song wherever the simple is appreciated.

The last of the trio was Arthur A. Penn of Bayside, who in 1918 published the justly renowned *Smilin' Through*. The song has an interesting background. It was written on a Long Island Rail Road train commuting between Penn Station and Bayside. The author, by profession a librettist for musical comedies and operettas, was attracted to a road-side advertisement of a white cottage, in front of which stood a girl waiting for her loved one, her smile "shining thru" the vine-covered gate.

No regional study is representative without reference to the "native son" or "grass root" bards of the area. The work of such writers need not be and usually is not artistically outstanding; local-color writing has its own *raison d'être*. What a soil-poet lacks in high inspiration and sophisticated polish, he generally repays in real imagery, living language and human interest.

Bloodgood Cutter, who was born in 1817, was one of the first typically Long Island folk-singers. From his home in Prospect Hill overlooking Little Neck Bay, this self-styled "Long Island Farmer Poet" produced many pages of verse. Some were pen pictures of local figures, whether historically prominent or rurally characteristic. Some were occasional odes written to celebrate events of local interest, such as births, deaths, husking bees, school graduations and county fairs. One of his better-known pieces in this style was an account of the *Voyage of the Quaker City in an Excursion to Palestine*—which incident Mark Twain made famous in his *Innocents Abroad*. Like much of the writing of the period, Cutter's verse depended on the Bible for rudiments as well as for style, and delightfully possessed the anecdotal touch, natural and common only to native-son poets.

Much later appeared the work of Simon Sigmund Tanhauser. Frequently termed the poet laureate of Long Island, he first chanted the *Rhymes of the Sunrise Trail* in 1929. When he says "I bring to ye only the breath of the Land of the Sunrise", he is trying to convey in descriptive verse and amiable metres the various physical and social aspects of the Island he seemed to enjoy so well. Whether noticing the sands on the South Shore or the cliffs on the North, the scrub pine or the farms, fishermen on jetties or families by firelight, old mills or new roads, he is realistic, natural, imaginative and colorful. He took seriously his role of Island skald, and was a folk singer of folk themes in the best tradition.

Purely native poetry, however, appears far more frequently in local journals than it does in collected volumes. Indeed, some of the best Island poetry is anthologized in village newspapers. For example, between the years 1780 and 1800 Selleck Osborne conducted and frequently contributed to the "Poet's Corner" in the Sag Harbor paper. These columns abounded in tuneful opposites, from laments for departed cats to humorous lines on such subjects as wharf crickets and gas lights. The *Farmer's Museum* of around 1800 specialized in the rousing ballad form, with such verses as "Squeak the fife and beat the drum; Independence Day is come". Then in 1825 appeared Huntington's *Long Island Journal of Philosophy and Cabinet of Variety*. It was edited by a Samuel Fleet, "assisted by a number of Literary Gentlemen", most of whom excelled in the art of occasional verse, satire and local elegy. Orville Terry's verse in the 1850 papers of Orient Point were mostly seascapes and ship songs. Even today local-color poems, like Paul Bailey's splendid ballad of *Treading Clams*, are found in the issues of the *Long Island Forum*, thus becoming part of Long Island anthologies of native verse.

Island poetry has never been lacking in humor; it is quite possible, moreover, that the ability to laugh in song (so to make others laugh) has been one of the most characteristic traits of the literature. There is humor in the chit-verse of the local newspapers; in the rollicking native ballads; in the anecdotes and character sketches so common to the post-revolution period; in the satires and broadsides of the days before the Revolution; and most certainly in the *vers de société* which has been characteristic of all of the Island's poetic cycles.

One of the earliest humorists was William P. Hawes. His *Political Parodies*, written under the penname of J. Cypress, Jr., was published in 1842. The book, sometimes in doggerel, sometimes in Drydenlike, smoothly subtle satires, always extremely clever, has been made famous by lines to Nicholas Biddle, the closing of whose bank by Andrew Jackson in 1837 prompted: "Fallen is thy throne, o Nick—silence is o'er thy bank".

When Christopher (Kit) Morley moved to his "Green Retreat" in Roslyn nearly thirty years ago, Long Island became the home of one of the country's most brilliant wits. Writing in his hutch-like author's ivory tower on the grounds of his estate, Morley has produced many volumes of essays, stories, dramas and poems, even while editing the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Many of his distinguished parodies, puns and quips have appeared in letters to friends and in the pages of local magazines and newspapers. He tells, for example, how the "North Shore was once full of copses, now is full of cops." He has been known also to pay tribute to the Long Island clam as "that most admirable creature because so silent". One of Morley's most delightful pieces was the *Wooing Song for Sir Toby Belch*, written as an addition to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The character of his humor might well be epitomized



in his own line: "Let reason, like the night owl, pass and cast her feather on the grass."

Two women poets achieved a certain degree of prominence in the Island's poetic life during the years of sentiment, 1800-1848. They are worthy of mention inasmuch as they illustrate that local poets, while physically removed from centers of culture, could nevertheless be within the literary tradition of the time. If they could not create a new art form or reproduce native forms, at least it was quite possible for them to conform charmingly, successfully and inimitably to existing standards.

A Miss Elizabeth Bogard is typical of the point in question. An Islander by birth and choice of habitation, many miles separated from the 1800 literary centers of Philadelphia and Boston, she nevertheless could exemplify the sentimental lyricism of that period. One song, called *He Came Too Late*, is more than a little known because of the attention paid to it by Edgar Allan Poe. Though his praise, by present day standards, may be a kiss of death, the poem still bears his threefold tribute of "verve, dignity and finish".

Then there was the fabulous Elizabeth Oakes-Smith, who was writing out of Patchogue in the middle of the last century. Rich, domineering, famous in her home town, she was on friendly terms with the leading artistic figures of the era: Bryant, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Stephen Foster. She was somewhat of a Swedenborgian mystic, and enjoyed a spiritual communion with the Boston Transcendental school, then prominent but seemingly confined to Back Bay. Not highly original but quite representative, her lyrics bear such typical titles as *The Drowned Mariner*, in the sentimental manner; *The Sinless Child*, in the mystic; and *The Water*, a highly descriptive nature lyric in the style of *Thanatopsis*.

Another poetess, who never wrote a stanza on the Island, seems, nevertheless, by an accident of fate, to have become an adopted daughter. She was Margaret Fuller, the Boston writer and critic, friend of Emerson, Hawthorne and Holmes, and priestess of the Transcendental sect, who with her husband and baby died in an 1850 shipwreck off Fire Island. In 1901 the Point O' Woods Association erected a memorial tablet which eulogizes the woman as "noble in thought and in character, eloquent of tongue and pen, who was an inspiration to many of her own time and whose uplifting influences abide with us."

It quite frequently happens, in the literary history of a region, that exchanges of artists are made with other countries. When such is the case, a foreign country can be said to benefit by local thinking, and local thinking by foreign art. An interesting example of each of these facts occurs in the last century.

The British journalist, William Cobbett, spent the years 1818-19 in New Hyde Park as a gentleman farmer. In enforced exile because of his somewhat scurrilous and vituperative exposés of frauds in the English government, Cobbett produced his *Grammar of the English Language for Working People*, *Journal of Year's Residence in the United States*, *The American Garden*, and *Advice to Young Men*

while in this area. His style is homespun and abounds in witticisms and moralisms. Humorously, he is sometimes styled poet because of the poetic licences he took so often in his thinking and writing, although his frequent and successful use of original couplets and quatrains to clinch a point earns him the title in a truer sense. In any case he was most definitely an Island gain.

The poet Stuart Merrill, however, who was born in Hempstead in 1863, was educated in France. He learned the language of his adopted country so well, and became so proficient in the difficulties of French versification, that his major works seem far removed from the tongue of Long Island. His *Les Gammes*, of which there is a first edition in the Hempstead Library, earned him renown in 1887. Merrill's work was quite popular in the French capital. As a poet he was an extremely clever versifier in the French lyric tradition, and an early forerunner of impressionism. If Cobbett brought the international scene to Long Island, Merrill carried at least the name of his birthplace abroad.

In addition to producing genre writers and those who follow the literary trends of their own age, Long Island has also nurtured poets who are "out of space", in the sense that they are not inhibited by region, and "out of time", in that they are ahead of their time in literary matter and form.

One such poet was the darkling *enfant terrible* of Sag Harbor, George Sterling. Born in 1869, he lived the first eighteen years of his tragic life in that village. As a boy he was a mischief-maker, and as such has become the center of many local legends. His nature was sometimes almost recklessly wild, other times merely whimsical, quite frequently pessimistic. Sterling's early poems took the form of local-color ballads about the sea and whaling, and are characterized by wonderment, movement and boisterousness. Although at times he approached a kind of humor, even his puns were cynical and his laughs had a bitterness about them.

The young poet moved to California where he quickly made a strong friendship with Jack London, a man of quite his own temperament. Indeed, he appears in *Martin Eden*, London's autobiographical novel, as the Californian's only friend, "a magnificently ugly man", "intense", "mad", "a hard liver and a hard drinker". He began to write in earnest, producing, generally speaking, two types of poetry. One was the sea ballad, with such titles as *Master Mariner* and *Ballad of Swabs*. They are utterly realistic, large and blunt. In them the sea has caused a brooding in the same way it affected Herman Melville, Robinson Jeffers and Hart Crane. The other type was the bitter, disillusioned sonnet. These poems suffer the loss of a departing world. Sterling, a romantic like "Miniver Cheevy", appeared here as one unable to get along with life (nor was life able to get along with him although California made him her poet laureate). In these sonnets, filled with contradictory feelings and changing moods, Sterling asked such questions as "Shall we give up our morning to murder and our noon to eternal sleep?" A final question, "Has man the right to die and disappear when





MR. BRYANT'S LIBRARY AT CEDARMERE.

*Deem not the framing of a deathless lay  
The pastime of a drowsy summer day.*

Where, at Roslyn, William Cullen Bryant Wrote  
Many Famous Poems



(Photo Courtesy of F. Kull)

"Cedarmere," Home of William Cullen Bryant, Roslyn



he has lost the fight?" he did answer—by suicide. Sterling's poetry, years ahead of its time in thought and style, was typical only of itself, and, like its author, was brilliant and shocking, strong but tragic.

Another kind of poet, yet equally brilliant and quite as original, was John Hall Wheelock. He was born, 1886, in Far Rockaway, studied at Harvard, took a European Ph.D. degree, then became a successful business man with the publishing house of Scribner. As a student he produced his first volume, *Verses by Two Undergraduates*, his collaborator having been the learned critic, Van Wyck Brooks. Works which followed were *Human Fantasy* (1911), *Beloved Adventure* (1912), *Love and Liberation* (1913), *Dust and Light* (1919), *The Black Panther* (1922), *Bright Doom* (1927), and the *Collected Poems* (1936). It is interesting to note that many of his pieces were composed mentally while the poet walked for hours along deserted beaches in the Rockaways. His work is highly individualistic and spontaneous. His lyrics are sometimes ethereally mystic, sometimes frenzied with a lush beauty. Wheelock possesses the gifts of contemplation, awareness and passion in colorful blends, and is best described by his own ecstatic lines: "The eternal passion stretches me apart, and I lie silent—but my body shakes."

A poet of unusual interest is Nathalia Crane. Brooklyn born, she created a critical stir by producing her first volume, *Janitor's Boy*, at the age of eleven. Such diverse authorities as W. R. Benet, Louis Untermeyer, Nunnally Johnson and James Hart highly praised this initial work for its bright imagery, easy rhythms and quite mature thinking. For subject matter she has relied almost entirely on Island people and themes, casting over both, as one critic put it, "a clairvoyant illumination". Four volumes have followed the first, each with unusual insights and original approaches which make Nathalia Crane inimitably different.

But there is yet a higher difference. Some poets are so gifted that not only are they apart from the regular tradition, they are far above it. Loyal historians must do battle over such men; for the world demands them. If the region which produced them produced no others, that place could still claim motherhood to genius, nursehood to culture's finest flowers.

Long Island proudly claims both titles. William Cullen Bryant, the American Wordsworth and one of literature's great romanticists, she harbored for thirty-three of his most fertile years; Walt Whitman, first realist, founder of one of the most powerful schools of poetry in modern literature, and true genius among men and poets, she mothered in both a physical and artistic sense.

If world literature has granted high place to Bryant and Whitman on Mount Parnassus, what can Islanders do but acclaim in like manner? One thing more—while praising these literary giants, recognize that part of the largeness of each of these men was distinctly small, their own Island village; part of the international sweep of their work was uniquely local, because of their Island backgrounds; and that part of the supposedly heaven-sent inspiration of each poet was both inimitable and earth-bound.



Bryant came down from Vermont in 1825, a poet writing Byronic poetry and a lawyer practicing Websterian law, to edit the *New York Review*, then the *United States Review*, and finally the *New York Post*. He remained with the last for the rest of his life, becoming one of the nation's most distinguished journalists. But while living in the city he began to lose the poetic touch which, for him, had always been merely pleasing enough, although never either original or strong. Then in 1845 he moved out to "Cedarmere", in Roslyn, where he lived until his death in 1878. It was in this charming home and exquisite country that the character of Bryant's poetry underwent important changes. From superficial sentimentality it matured into the richest kind of Romanticism. What before was borrowed now became *in* and *per se*. The rhetoric of the earlier style changed into the eloquence of the later. And, most important, the abstract descriptions once founded on purely mental concepts appeared now as concrete imagery, unquestionably based upon immediate surroundings.

In these greenest of years, Bryant studied nature—Long Island nature—in an intense yet objective fashion. "Cedarmere" became to him what "Grasmere" was to Wordsworth. He looked about him, and saw, clearly now, that the physical life was an emanation of a higher spiritual life. This was a happy discovery for him, one which gave him an optimism founded on principle. He no longer wept over the transience of life as reflected in the change of seasons, but rejoiced in the flux and variety which promised a kind of immortality. The volumes of poetry he produced on Long Island, *Thirty Poems* ('60), *Hymns* ('69), *Little People of the Snow* ('73), *Among the Trees* ('74), and *Flood of Years* ('78), are perhaps his best; for in them his philosophy of art and life is settled. It can only be supposed that this was so because he was settled in his surroundings. Possessed always of nobility of mind and technical skill, he needed a "Cedarmere" to change verse to poetry. Moreover, when in his later poems he wrote of nature, it was the nature in Roslyn he meant. Islanders should feel proud that when Bryant gave the following advice to would-be poets, he most probably had his adopted home in mind:

Seek'st thou, in living lays,  
     To limn the beauty of the earth and sky?  
 Before thine inner gaze  
     Let all that beauty in clear vision lie;  
 Look on it with exceeding love, and write  
     The words inspired by wonder and delight.

Walt Whitman certainly knew the meaning of those words. His poetry, which has always claimed as first attributes the phrases "spontaneous in rhythm" and "natural in language", seemed to spring from earth and air. Of all the Long Island poets he was most influenced by the Island—for which he paid her highest tributes.

This "good gray poet" was born, May 31, 1819, in West Hills, near Huntington, "a romantic and beautiful spot", as he called it. Although his family moved to Brooklyn when Walt was a boy, he made frequent visits to his grandfather's home on Long Island Sound. The places he apparently knew best were Norwich, Hempstead, Babylon, Smithtown (where he taught school and headed the local debating society) and the cottage in West Hills (where "the lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed").

Like so many other American writers, Whitman had his start as a newspaperman. When an old man he remarked: "My first



*Hallock's Inn, Smithtown Branch, Where Walt Whitman Boarded While, as a Young Man, He Taught School in that Village*

real venture was *The Long Islander*, in my own beautiful town of Huntington in 1839." This paper contained his first poem, a Bryant-like *Our Future Lot*. How true are the lines of Jesse Merritt, Nassau County Historian: "Huntington's earth is now epochal soil" because of the "Fonts now lost, but set as he sang; for Whitman the printer was how he began."

Whitman really wrote only one book, *Leaves of Grass*. The first line of that work, "Starting from fish-shape Paumanok", begins a long series of tributes to his native soil. Very frequently in his later life he longed "to go back to the place where I was born/ to hear the birds sing once more/ to ramble about the house and barn/ and over the fields once more/ and through orchard, and/ along the old lanes once more." Indeed, his earliest impressions were his strongest, the making of the poet as well as the man. As he tells us: "There was a child went forth every day/ and the first object he looked upon he became/ And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day/ Or for many years or stretching cycles of years."



Poet and man, Whitman was large; consequently his influences were many. One was the magnificent preaching of the Long Island Quaker, Elias Hicks; this gave his poetry its reverential, almost messianic tone. Another was the sea, which to him was like "a cradle endlessly rocking." In the *Paumanok* and *Passage to India* sections of the *Leaves*, one can find the sea and the things of the sea in many physical and spiritual connotations. Whitman loved the people of Long Island, especially her working people, like farmers, wagon drivers, sailors and farm-mothers. The friendliness and earthiness of Islanders, having attracted his insatiable curiosity, came alive again in his poetry. Their homes and lives, jobs and interests, even their speech patterns are the substance of his lines. Long Island was a living thing to Whitman, and, as in no other writing, Long Island lives in the *Leaves of Grass*.

Yet, Long Island born, bred and influenced, Whitman cannot be confined. As Christopher Morley said: "I call him Paumanok because I feel him especially in the earth of Long Island, but he lives everywhere." Perhaps the reason for this was best expressed by John Burroughs, Whitman's friend: "I climb the Whitman mountain when I want a big view and wide horizon and glimpse of the unknown."

If poets are dependent on locale for the substance of their art, so much more are painters. For poems need scenes mainly as sources of themes, whereas paintings need the scenes themselves. Moreover, in order for descriptive art to flourish in a given place, that region must provide a friendly atmosphere in which the artist may work.

Several factors explain why Long Island has occupied a high position in the history of American art. One is that the variety in the scenic beauty makes the area attractive to artists. A second is that, from the earliest times to the present day, art clubs, groups societies, leagues and associations, finding Islanders enthusiastic about the subject, have welcomed the opportunity to organize for cultural purposes on the Island, and to develop and produce in congenial surroundings. The third factor—a realization of the statement that "it takes a great deal of history to produce a little art"—is perfectly clear when one considers the wide historical importance of Long Island. An interpretation of these factors will reveal that Long Island art may be considered under two headings: painters from and of the Island.

Three painters from Long Island are outstanding in their fields: Feke, in portraiture; Worth, in prints; and Mount, in landscapes. Robert Feke, who was born in 1705, was one of the most famous portrait painters of his day. As a boy he ran away to sea from his Oyster Bay home, and, legend has it, learned the art of painting while a prisoner in Spain. Most of his best work was done much later in his life in Newport, Rhode Island, where many important personages of his day "sat" for him. His portraits carry conviction. The rich and elaborate texture of a Feke canvas is strikingly lifelike. As one critic has said of him: "For a pictorial record of the people of his time, and for the intrinsic value of each carefully molded face, Feke's art is a fine art."

Thomas Worth, not a native-born artist, has so long been associated with the Island that he has become native. As a person and artist Worth had three interests: volunteer firemen rushing to fires, horses, particularly trotters, and Currier and Ives prints. His "Firemen Series", which really gained for him a nation-wide reputation, reflect in a humorous, colorful way his 1834 home near a New York City firehouse. Then his Long Island associations (mostly in Islip) helped to acquaint him with horses; for, from the days of the Newmarket Course on the Hempstead Plains in the 1660s, this area has been a congenial gathering place for followers of the sport of kings. Finally, his interest in Currier and Ives seems to stem from the fact that in 1847 Nathaniel Currier issued a print of General Worth (Thomas' uncle) at the *Storming of the Bishop's Palace* in the Mexican War. President Harry T. Peters of the Grolier Club has pointed out the "great obligation due to Worth who actually started the enthusiasm for collections of Currier and Ives." Indeed, the lithographs of Worth himself, some of which have gone as far afield as the art gallery of England's Royal Family, are similar to the work of the "print-makers to the American people" in their wit and dignity, ability and affability. As a matter of fact, much of Worth's work was reproduced by Currier and Ives.

Worth's art, while represented at its best in lithographs of rural scenes, may also be recognized in other lines. His water colors are collectors' items—poignantly simple, charmingly blended. Moreover, his talents in the line of caricature warranted from Bryant the praise of a style that had an "original, amazing incongruity." He was indeed a master of satire; humor was his field; cracker-barrel story-telling in paint his unique gift.

A third Island-born painter of the highest distinction was William S. Mount. He was the son of Thomas Mount of old Stony Brook and Setauket roots, and had three painting brothers, Henry, Shepard and Robert. Henry did landscapes; Shepard attended the National Academy of Design; while Robert and William began as sign painters. The Mount homestead at Stony Brook was actually the first studio for the four brothers, each of them contributing to its decoration.

William's canvases, of which probably the most famous is "Eel-spearing at Setauket", are mainly concerned with Long Island scenes. He who loved quiet beauty and hated city life was quite content to isolate himself in his country retreat. When he did choose to move about—in a portable studio of his own design and making—it was only to catch new glimpses of old Island scenes. His series of Long Island farmhouses for the Metropolitan Museum is a classic in American art. Mount's most significant characteristic seems to have been a subtle but perfect ability to reproduce quaint, homey, gentle, humorous Island-isms.

William Mount, who was native born, had, therefore, a natural interest in Long Island subjects. Many other noteworthy artists, from many parts of the country, have chosen Long Island as their own in the larger artistic sense. The National Academy, for example, in its listings from the year of its foundation until only 1860, gives



recognition to twenty-five pictures with Long Island settings. In later years, after the time of the Mounts, a highly representative group of American artists have selected certain parts of Paumanok for their work. Thomas Moran was attracted by the East Hampton dunes. William Steeple Davis produced many fine water colors from the end of his wharf at Orient Point. Fishermen, water scenes by



(From watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis)

*The Brookville Church*

day and night, and seascapes in the contrasts of storm and calm make up the bulk of his work. Henry Diamond has made exquisite woodcuts of old houses and rural roads in mid-Island. Charles Henry Miller was particularly fascinated by such diverse subjects as "The Graveyard of Ships at Port Washington", "East Hampton When a Hamlet", "Marshes of Great South Bay", "Gray Day on Long Island", and the famous "Autumn Oaks at Creedmoor". The English artist, George R. Avery, did etchings of the Colyer House, Old Court House, Tryon Hall, Raynham Hall, Fire Island Light, and other notable landmarks. John Ewers, also interested in the historic, preserved on canvas that important relic, Bedell Tavern.

Finally, Long Island has been and will be important to American art for the reason of a rather unique phenomenon—the number of art groups which have organized on the Island. One of the first and most well-known examples of this communal art was the Tile Club, founded in 1877 by F. Hopkinson Smith. The Club provided artists with a common ground of fellowship and an opportunity for the discussion of their work. The members would paint in common somewhere on the Island, following their excursion with critical appraisals (as well as hearty suppers in Long Island taverns). Some excellent paintings grew out of the group, notably E. A. Abbey's Orient Point series, W. G. Bunce's boats of all kinds and descriptions, and Smith's interesting depictions of East Hampton.

This tradition continued when, in 1891, William Chase, who as a landscape painter was particularly interested in the Shinnecock Hills, founded a summer art school on the eastern end of the Island. The venture proved most successful from two standpoints: one of the excellent work which the school fostered; the other of the incentive which the group gave to the Long Island art school-colony movement.

Today, numerous associations, like the Art League of Nassau County, fostered by artist Cyril A. Lewis and the art centers in the various Long Island colleges, are carrying on the rewarding practice of group art work. This factor, plus the kind and number of the art colonies now so active during the summer months, has made art popular on Long Island. And even if this were not so, the Island itself would probably retain enough of her natural charm still to attract the individual artist.

Yes, Long Island has been able to supply her creative artists with the locale necessary to the substance of their art. Poets and painters alike need natural beauty, variety, charm, tradition, proper balance of people and space, a combination of activity and solitude—in a word, the “matter” of culture. Because Long Island has such a matter, the Muses of poetry and painting, and their charges, have spent many happy hours in the artistically fortunate land “between the city and the sea”.





## CHAPTER XL

### *A Brief History of the Long Island Rail Road*

DAVID ROBINSON GEORGE

*Publicity Representative, Long Island Rail Road*

**B**OTH LONG ISLAND and the Long Island Rail Road have grown mightily since 1834, when the railroad was chartered by the State of New York. In the succeeding century, their developments have been closely linked; and similarly, their futures are dependent upon each other.

The first railroad on the Island was the Brooklyn & Jamaica, ten miles long, which was leased by the Long Island Rail Road (as the charter reads) in 1835, a year after the company's formation, for \$33,000 a year, or ten per cent of the cost of building and equipping the line.

In Jamaica, where now more than 650 trains a day arrive from various directions on 14 tracks and are routed through a maze of switches with miraculous accuracy, only four trains a day arrived in 1837, when the Long Island had extended its tracks an additional 15 miles to Hicksville.

The Long Island Company had been formed with the idea of providing a faster link between New York and Boston on the Charleston-Boston trading and passenger route, which then required the use of Commodore Vanderbilt's Sound steamers, a trip taking 16 hours. The Old Colony Railroad, between Boston and Providence, had extended its tracks down to Stonington, Conn., and the Long Island's sponsors had wanted, at first, to build a railroad on the mainland from New York to Stonington.

But surveying expeditions had found the hills and rivers of Connecticut unconquerable, and the backers were forced to turn to the alternative plan for a more level route from New York to Greenport, thence by ferry to Stonington, where passengers and freight would be put aboard the Old Colony trains. With this in mind, the Long Island Company was formed, the Brooklyn & Jamaica rented and construction started on the 85-mile line from Jamaica to Greenport. The tracks had been extended to Hicksville when the financial panic of 1837 compelled the company to cease building.

Operating but two trains each way a day and reduced to picking up passengers at crossroads to get much-needed revenue, the Long Island was sinking in a mire of debt and about to disappear when the State of New York came to the rescue with a loan of \$100,000.

Construction was resumed immediately, and by 1841 the tracks had been extended to Farmingdale; Suffolk Station (near present Brentwood) was reached in 1842; Millville, now Yaphank, in 1843, and Greenport in 1844. The new route to Boston was put into effect and promptly hailed as a magnificent achievement, in that it reduced the 16-hour water trip by half.



The completion of the line to Greenport was the occasion of a monster celebration. On Saturday, July 27, 1844, two days before the opening of the line for public service, a special train from Brooklyn carried officials of the road, notables in public life, and other invited guests, numbering several hundred, to the terminus. The 95-mile trip was made in three and one-half hours, and upon arrival 500 citizens were entertained at dinner.



(Photo from Brainard Collection, Brooklyn Museum)

*Long Island Rail Road Wood-burning Locomotive and Wooden Passenger Cars, near Port Jefferson, circa 1878*

Speeches were made and many toasts proposed, by President George B. Fisk, and a number of others. Mr. Fisk expressed particular gratitude to the Mayor and Common Council of Brooklyn for their labors on behalf of the enterprise.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* devoted some three thousand words of elaborately eloquent description to the trip and celebration, including the following remarkable account of the first invasion of Suffolk County by steam locomotive and train:

The interior of old Suffolk, which until that day had been sacred to the gambols of wild deer and the profound repose of whose thickets (for of trees it is comparatively innocent) had only been disturbed now and then by the sharp

crack of the huntsman's whetting his scythe, or the low rumble of the village coach as it plodded on at the rate of five miles an hour, was saluted for the first time by the shrill whistle of the locomotive and the iron horse with lungs of brass and sinews of steel, come dashing on at a furious rate, puffing volumes of smoke and flames from his nostrils and warning the people who gazed in astonishment upon his freaks that the prediction of seers and prophets (like Fulton, Watts and Evans) was accomplished, the wild fowl startled from their banquetting in the creeks and tributaries of the Peconic arose high in the air, careered in ominous circles above the monster and his train, and then with a fearful scream, took their departure—never more to return.

The stag peered timidly out from his covert upon the approaching phantom, tossed his antlers in wonder and departed for the "Great West," and the very colts, half frantic with joy at their emancipation from drudgery, galloped in all the freedom of deliverance.

The bright yellow cars in use then would contrast sharply with the maroon coaches of today. Running on single, standard-gauge tracks, they were drawn by wood-burning locomotives. The first two locomotives, quaintly named Ariel and Postboy, were DeWitt Clintons bought originally by the Brooklyn & Jamaica in 1834, when horses were a more reliable and more popular form of motive power.

Rickety and noisy, the locomotives had four drive-wheels and smokestacks or chimneys, as they were known then, as big in diameter as their boilers. Water and wood reserves were carried behind on flatcars. Ten miles per hour was a good speed.

In the early days, extending railroad communication to a town frequently meant great wealth to the owners of property. It also resulted in many instances of excessive and unhealthy speculation, with ensuing collapse and loss. Upon learning of the decision of the Long Island Rail Road management to construct a branch to Hempstead, the *Hempstead Inquirer*, on October 26, 1836, tempered its jubilation with a note of caution. After observing that the construction of the branch would place Hempstead within an hour's ride of New York and Brooklyn, and correctly predicting that the effect must be to "induce many who now occupy those cities, to come and live amongst us," the paper said:

We do not care to see much of the wilderness of speculation in our quiet village such as has hitherto followed the course of the railroad improvements; but if individuals can be induced to purchase lots here, and build up dwelling houses and places of business, we shall rejoice at it. Enterprise and capital have effected wonders and we know not why a village so favorably situated as Hempstead is, in all respects, should not command its full share of both these influences.



Passenger and mail revenues rose as traffic increased, and the Long Island's future appeared rosy, but trouble was in store. Suffolk farmers had become bitter. Their fields and forests were set on fire by sparks from the locomotives' stacks; the clatter of the wheels, puffing of the steam and shrieking of the whistles frightened their horses and stock and disturbed their rest, and the smoke sprinkled their wives' wash with cinders.

Furthermore, the trains had the audacity to run on Sundays, desecrating the Sabbath. It was too much.

With lightning retaliation the farmers banded into groups and tore up the tracks, burned stations and pulled spikes, wrecking whole trains. The law, enlisted by the railroad, was of no assistance against vigilantes who struck in the middle of the night. As its next gesture the Long Island stopped Sunday trains, but this did not assuage the irate farmers. Not until the road's officials journeyed out to Suffolk and personally awarded cash damages to those who claimed them was peace reached.

Hardly had this been accomplished when a new group of railroad backers succeeded in overcoming the geographical difficulties of Connecticut, and the tide of traffic at once turned. By 1850, the Long Island had been forced into receivership.

The Long Island had been carrying Manhattan-bound passengers to the old South Ferry in Brooklyn, from which they were ferried across to the Battery. Deprived of this connection, the road proceeded to lay tracks from Jamaica to Long Island City, then Hunter's Point as a substitute main line. Economies were instituted, including the reduction of the Brooklyn & Jamaica rental by almost half, and the railroad was on the way to prosperity again by 1865.

In that year, Oliver Charlick, who had built other railroads, obtained control of the Long Island by unobtrusively buying a major portion of its stock. Charlick propounded policies of no new construction, no improvements in service and more profit. As a result, 30 local railroads were organized during the period of his control, and by 1875 two systems, the North Side and the South Side, were in operation.

Chief of the new roads was the Long Island Central, backed by A. T. Stewart, wealthy founder of Garden City. Its lines ran from Flushing to Garden City, branching off to Hempstead and Babylon. Also included in the North Side system, was a line from Long Island City, through Flushing and Whitestone to Great Neck. The South Side lines ran from Babylon to Patchogue, from Valley Stream to Hempstead and Rockaway Beach and from Fresh Pond to Long Island City.

By this time the Long Island, in addition to its main line between Long Island City and Greenport, had built branches from Jamaica to Far Rockaway, from Winfield to Flushing, from Mineola to Hempstead and Locust Valley, from Manorville to Sag Harbor and from Hicksville to Port Jefferson.

Such intensive competition induced rate wars which brought all three systems near failure. The Havemeyer and Poppenhausen interests successively got control of first the Long Island and then the

North and South Side systems, but the high local road leases brought about a receivership.

At this point, Austin Corbin, a financier, bought the combined Long Island systems with money from Boston and London, and proceeded to improve them and replace equipment until the Long Island had again become a leading railroad.

During the period of Corbin's control, from 1880 until his death in 1896, the Long Island paid dividends, but Corbin's backers were far from sufficiently rewarded, for they had planned to have the railroad feed a system of resorts they proposed to develop.

About this time, a great feat of engineering was planned. It was proposed to tunnel the East River from Flatbush Avenue Station into New York City, thus freeing the commuters from their dependence on ferries and bridges. This was not carried out because of the extension of the New York City subway system under the East River.

In 1900, in connection with its plans for tunneling the Hudson River and constructing a station in the heart of Manhattan, the Pennsylvania Railroad acquired a majority of the stock of the Long Island. It is by reason of this fact that the Long Island Rail Road, since 1910, has enjoyed its present New York passenger terminal in the centrally located Pennsylvania Station.

The work of electrifying the western portion of the Long Island Rail Road system was commenced in 1904 and the first trial operation was in 1905. Six sections were successively opened for public use in 1905 and 1906.

In addition to its extensive electrification, the Long Island Rail Road was first among American railroads to use steel passenger cars. This was in 1905, when it commenced electric operation. It was first, also, to eliminate all wooden passenger equipment, and in 1927 became the first railroad in the country to operate every one of its steam and electric passenger trains with an exclusive complement of steel cars.

From the day the Pennsylvania Railroad took over, the Long Island Rail Road property and equipment value has increased from \$28,225,000 to more than \$150,000,000. This figure does not include any part of the \$115,000,000 the Pennsylvania spent in building the Pennsylvania Station and its vast tunnel system.

To convert the Long Island's equipment to steel cars, and make it the first all-steel car railroad in the country, the Pennsylvania spent for that alone approximately \$15,000,000. To electrify 448 miles of tracks took \$40,000,000.

The Long Island Rail Road today (1947) operates 967.5 miles of track over 370 miles of right-of-way, one third of which is electrified and the rest steam-operated.

The railroad daily operates 813 regular passenger trains in the Summer, 746 in the Winter and 33 regular freight trains.

Equipment consists of 1322 electric and 323 steam coaches; 124 steam, 52 electric and 3 Diesel locomotives.

The great investment in the Long Island Rail Road made by the Pennsylvania Railroad has contributed greatly toward the development of Long Island.



Five times as many people live on Long Island today as in 1900. Assessed property values on Long Island now are nearly \$7,500,000,000—many times greater than in 1900.

Yet, while the Pennsylvania's vision has been vindicated, the financial return to it has been infinitesimal. Only seven times in 46 years has the Long Island Rail Road paid a dividend. In recent years, up until World War II, there has been nothing but heavy yearly deficits.



*First Electric Train to Hempstead, 1908*

In the 18-year period between 1922 and 1940, the Long Island Rail Road's total tax bill rose 300 per cent, while property taxes, which constitute three-fourths of the railroad's annual tax bill, rose 120 per cent. In Nassau County alone, in this period, property taxes rose to the alarming extent of 501 per cent as a result of the intensified development of that residential area, in which the railroad had played a principal part. It is significant to note that although the Long Island Rail Road's property investment between 1922 and 1940 increased 74 per cent, the railroad's property taxes in all four Long Island counties rose 120 per cent.

At the same time, Long Island Rail Road commutation fares stood still. The Long Island Rail Road is the only Class I railroad in the nation which depends upon passenger traffic for more than 50 per cent of its total revenue. In normal times, the Long Island Rail

Road handles more than 70 per cent passenger traffic and less than 30 per cent freight traffic, although this ratio has been altered somewhat by abnormal war conditions. Of all its passenger business, more than 70 per cent is commutation; yet until July, 1947, the Long Island Rail Road had no increase in its commutation fares since 1918, while other commuting railroads in the metropolitan area were granted increases ranging from 20 to 40 per cent since that time. On July 9, 1947, the Public Service Commission granted the Long Island a temporary 20 per cent increase in commutation fares pending the outcome of hearings on the railroad's request for increases amounting to 25 per cent.

The Long Island Rail Road is unique in several other ways. There is little industry on the eastern end of the Island to provide return loads, with the result that most freight cars which go out filled come back empty. While other railroads reap the benefits of carrying a freight load over thousands of miles, all Long Island freight business calls for a relatively short haul.

Most railroads depend upon freight for as much as 90 per cent of their revenue and carry on their passenger business, especially their commutation business, at little profit and very often at a loss. The Long Island, however, if it ever is to be on a permanently solvent or profitable basis, must make its passenger business pay. To do so, its fares must be adequate to cover the cost of the service provided with a margin for reasonable profit, as any private enterprise deserves.

In addition to insufficient fares and burdensome property taxes, other factors have been responsible for the fact that the Long Island Rail Road never has made money except for the brief period between 1925 and 1932 and the recent war period, when the Long Island again showed a profit, due to war-swollen traffic resulting principally from restrictions on other forms of transportation.

Foremost is the destructive competition from subways, buses, private automobiles and trucks. No one could foresee in the early '20s, when extension of the subway system to the city line was advocated, that modern buses would become feeders, thereby extending the effective radius of the subway many miles beyond its terminus. A vivid example of the disastrous effect of this combination is the fact that the total number of passengers carried annually by the Long Island Rail Road dropped from a high of nearly 119,000,000 in 1929 to a low of 70,000,000 in 1938, after the extension of the city-owned subway to Jamaica. Bus feeder lines from Nassau had sprung up, tapping the large commuting area in the western half of that county as well as other parts of Queens.

In June, 1941, the J. G. White Engineering Corporation of New York was engaged to make an independent study of the Long Island Rail Road to determine why, since 1935, it had earned no net income. This study was completed in June, 1942. Said the White firm's report:

In over forty years of retrospect, it would seem the Long Island Rail Road actually has received much greater benefit from this association than has the Pennsylvania.



While the Long Island Rail Road has undergone complete physical transformation, the principal beneficiaries, obviously, have been the people who live on the Island and those who use the Long Island Rail Road.

Without the assurance of public encouragement and the co-operation of the regulatory and taxing authorities in the practical form of drastic decrease or elimination of property taxes and substantial increase of commutation passenger fares, there is no inducement for the Pennsylvania to risk the loss of further capital in cash advances of many millions of dollars for needed improvements.

In connection with its petition to the Public Service Commission for increased fares in the early part of 1947, the Long Island Rail Road promised to undertake a broad program of improvements over a period of three years at a total cost of \$17,656,000. This program, which was begun soon after the temporary increase of 20 per cent in commutation was granted, although this increase fell far short of producing the requested revenue, consisted of:

New substations and equipment for better train performance at a cost of \$5,000,000.

New stations, shelters, platform extensions and rehabilitation, at a cost of \$675,000.

Many improvements in present cars, including metal window sash and safety glass, insulation in roofs and sides of cars to keep out summer's heat and winter's cold; five air-circulating fans for each car, centralized door controls for quickly opening and closing doors, improved springs for smoother riding, porcelain hoppers, Velon seat coverings and new motor generator sets for smoother operation of electrical controls and unfailing headlights, at a total cost of \$2,500,000.

One hundred fifty-five miles of new stone ballast, replacing cinders for cleaner, smoother rides, at a total cost of \$2,331,000.

Fifty new double-deck cars, the equivalent of five 10-car trains, providing 6600 more seats, at a total cost of \$7,150,000.

This program was in keeping with the Long Island Rail Road's promise to undertake far-reaching major improvements if granted the needed 25 per cent increase in commutation fares. Although the increase had not been granted in full, the work nevertheless was planned and pledged with faith that the justice of its request for the full increase would meet with final favorable action by the New York State Public Service Commission.

## CHAPTER XLI

### *Long Island Windmills of the 18th Century*

MEADE C. DOBSON

*Managing Director, The Long Island Association*

AT THE EASTERN end of Long Island from Shinnecock Hills to East Hampton, on Shelter Island and Gardiner's Island stand ancient landmarks, that are truly exclamation points on the countryside. For here are to be found 18th century windmills that ground grain for the settlers of 175 and more years ago. One of them, at East Hampton, even now grinds away in fair winds.

Eleven Long Island windmills are more or less intact, several with workable machinery that can be set in motion within a few days of preparation. Others are used for living purposes, adjuncts of, or attached to summer homes. Nowhere else in America are there as many of these pioneer mills still sturdily standing. Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Nantucket and Rhode Island together have not as many.

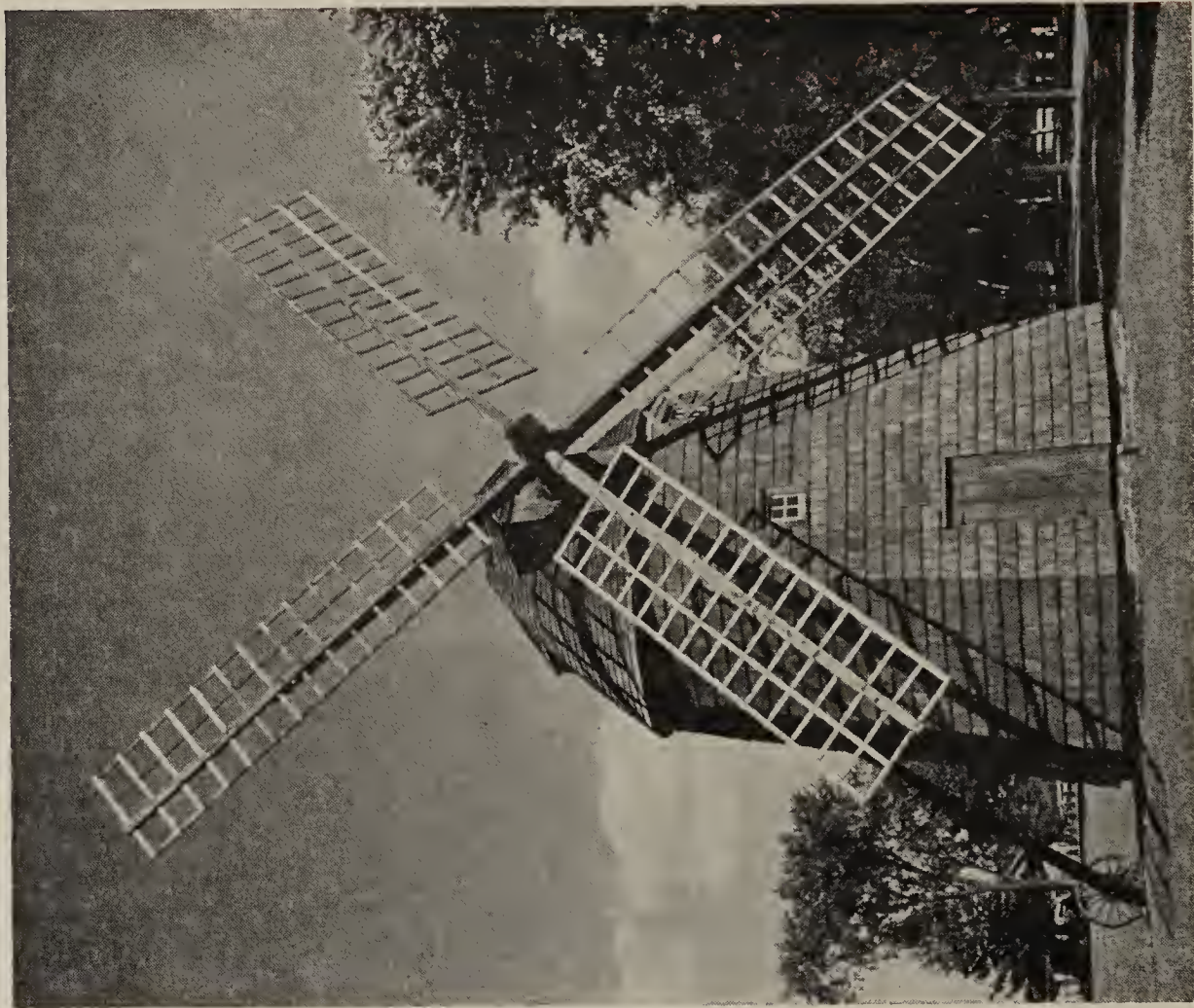
The history of these mills is fascinating. From the old records of builders, millers' toll books, and other data in the Pennypacker Long Island Collection at the East Hampton Free Library, and from traditions may be woven tales of human interest, revealing the times and conditions of early days. And character, too! Hundreds of visitors to eastern Long Island ask many questions about them from local historians and of The Long Island Association, which has compiled much windmill data as a result of innumerable inquiries.

East Hampton may be termed appropriately the "windmill village" for here are three of the mills—the Hook Mill (1796) on the green between Montauk Highway and the Three Mile Harbor Road, operating now and then to provide corn meal packages for visitors; the Pantigo Mill (1801), installed after two removals behind "Home Sweet Home", famed as John Howard Payne's birthplace, and now used as a museum, and the Gardiner Mill (1771) just across the road from the ancient village burying ground. Its spars for carrying the sails were destroyed by the hurricane of 1938 but its machinery is intact.

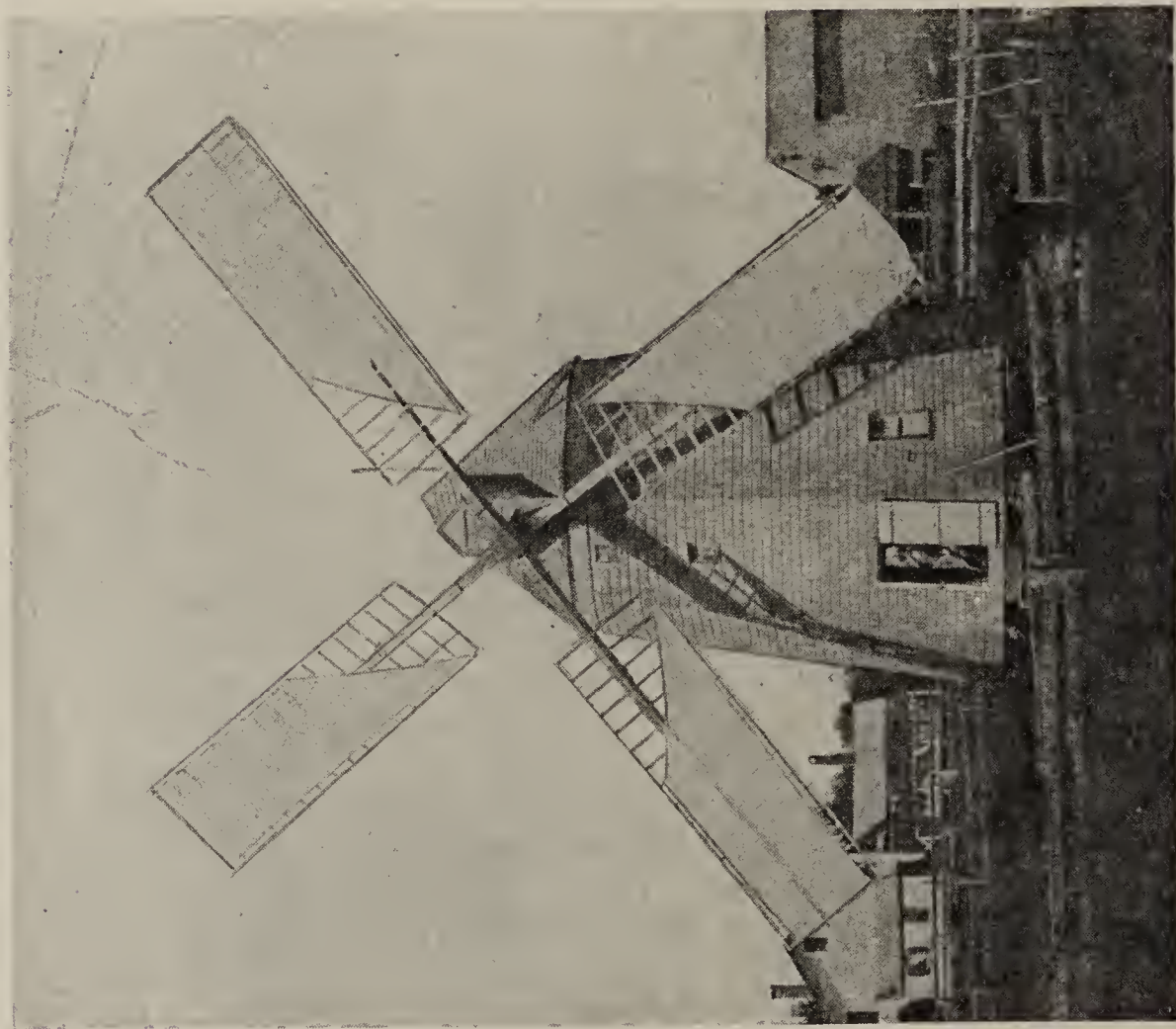
At Water Mill village stands the smallest of the mills and the only one with a tail pole for turning the sails into the wind. It was built in 1800 at North Haven and moved to its present location in 1813 by ox teams.

On the Berwind estate at Bridgehampton is a well preserved mill with a gracefully finished crown and an automatic wind-steering device. It was built in 1820 on Sleights Hill at Sag Harbor, where, on the arrival of whaling ships a flag was always raised on the mill—hence the old saying, "Flag on the mill—ship in the bay" It was moved to Bridgehampton in 1837.





*The Windmill at Water Mill, Southampton Town*



*The Gardiner Windmill at East Hampton*



At Hayground just east of Water Mill there stands a weather-worn mill built in 1801 and last operated in 1919. Its sail arms and main shaft were destroyed by a gale in 1938.

For many years a much-travelled mill stood on Montauk Point as part of a summer residence. It was built in 1763 at Southampton, thence moved to Wainscott, later moved to Montauk. In 1942, when the U. S. Army took over Montauk Point the old mill was moved back to Wainscott by a group of Georgica Pond residents.



*The old mill on the Sylvester Manor at Shelter Island. Built in 1795 at Southold, it was transported by barge across Shelter Island Sound*



*Old windmill at Hayground, near Bridgehampton, built in 1801 and operated last in 1909. Sail arms destroyed in 1930 gales*

Over on Gardiner's Island stands a mill built in 1803. It is painted white and serves as a landmark for yachtsmen. On Shelter Island the Sylvester Mill was operated during the first World War until 1919. It was built in 1810 at Southold and transported by barge across Shelter Island Sound some years later. Serving as part of a summer home in Southampton is a mill that was transported from Good Ground (now Hampton Bays) in 1890. Another mill, part of a summer residence on Shinnecock Hills, was moved from Mill Hill in Southampton in 1889 and is supposed to have been built between 1697 and 1713.

Full data and detailed measurements of these remaining historic Long Island structures were obtained in 1932 by Rex Wailes of London, millwright engineer and technical advisor for the English Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. He had previously inspected the windmills of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Follow-



ing his visit to Long Island with the writer, he prepared a descriptive technical paper about this large group of remaining Long Island windmills for the Newcomen Society of London and New York, which was delivered in 1935. His conclusions were that all eastern Long Island windmills were constructed according to English design and practice. He could find no Dutch (or Holland) influence in them but mentions some original features not found in other American mills which he ascribes to the ingenuity of the builders.

Here then on eastern Long Island are the visible reliques of long ago. The oldest of the effective mills is the Gardiner at East Hampton, 1771, but many years before this, old records mention numerous windmills, both grist and saw mills, that served their time in the "East Riding" of Long Island. Nowhere has been found definite record of the first mill to be erected by the first pioneers. But many mills were built and served their useful purpose during the 17th century.

May Long Island's old windmills be long preserved for the edification of its people and their posterity. Their preservation to date has been through purchase by, or presentation to municipalities, or they have remained in the possession of descendents of their former owners, or preserved as parts of summer homes. They are evidence of the beginning of free private enterprise which has made America great and prosperous.

## CHAPTER XLII

### *Aviation on Long Island*

PRESTON R. BASSETT

*President, Sperry Gyroscope Company*

A PHASE of Long Island's history which has been much neglected is the unique part which it has played in the development of aeronautics. The Island, with its beautiful level, grassy plains, became a natural flying field for the earliest birdmen. Then later, as airplanes could venture forth, its geographical position proved to be ideal. To the west of it stretches the whole width of the United States, to the east of it extends the great Atlantic Ocean. Strategically placed near the largest city in America and at the very boundary between the two most important expanses of land and water, it soon became the focal point or zero milestone for most of the great flights which were the stepping stones of progress in building aviation history. All of these factors have made it one of the great aviation centers of the world.

In tracing the early history, however, we must go back to the days when aeronautics meant ballooning. Balloonists generally shunned Long Island, surrounded as it was by water. However, the Island did furnish a safety barrier for the occasional balloonist who found himself drifting from the mainland towards the ocean. These occasional hurried descents of America's pioneer balloonists as they grappled for the last hold on terra firma were Long Island's introduction to the air age.

The decade of the 1830s marked the inauguration of American aeronautical history. During these years Professor Charles F. Durant, the first great American aeronaut, made a series of ascents in an American-made balloon. Several of these ascents were made from Castle Garden, New York. One of the most interesting of them was made in June, 1833. An unusually large crowd had gathered around Castle Garden at the Battery, attracted not only to watch the ascent, but also to see President Andrew Jackson, who was to witness the event. The take-off was made in a fair breeze and the balloon drifted up Manhattan Island and then swung over Brooklyn until it was "a speck in the sky" to the spectators. The balloon then drifted south-eastward over Long Island and headed for Jamaica Bay. Durant therefore had to maneuver for a quick landing, which he accomplished expertly by bringing the balloon down at the Union Course Racetrack in Jamaica. The first great American aeronaut thus introduced aeronautics to Long Island.

It was not until 1860 that Long Island was again visited, this time by another famous balloonist, Professor John Wise. Wise had made a great many successful ascents throughout the country over a period of twenty-five years and was considered the most experienced



aeronaut in America. In April, 1860, Professor Wise made an ascent from Palace Garden, a small private park located at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street in New York City, which he says, in a masterpiece of understatement, "became more interesting than I anticipated". A few notes from his story of the flight will give an idea of his first acquaintance with Long Island.

After sailing a few minutes in the southeast breeze, I went northward straight over the length of Randall's Island. There I rose higher and struck a breeze from the west and made for Flushing; there I descended with the intention of landing at Whitestone. A strong southeast surface wind was blowing. In coming down the last 1000 feet, the balloon made three miles in five minutes and I struck the ground near Bininger's cottage mansion on the shore of the Sound. In the concussion the balloon careened so much as to tilt out of the car a sand bag. As soon as the *Ganymede* recovered her perpendicular, she made a bound over the cottage, swinging the grapnel into the eaves of the roof, but the balloon being stronger than the part where the hook took effect, the eaves gave way. The hook next took effect in a big tree between the cottage and the Sound. A squall sent the balloon reeling on the beach with the rim of the wicker basket cut through by the anchor rope. In another moment my car was on the ocean wave. The squalls now and then became so violent as to careen the balloon over until she touched the sea, floundering me into the waters up to my shoulders and putting me through several hydropathic exercises not pleasurable to contemplate. I was half an hour in being dragged over the bay about a mile and a half in breadth. As we approached the opposite shore, a full open valve rendered the *Ganymede* so docile as to enable her to drag me well up on the beach with her water saturated load. Wet and chilled, I reached the land a little below Throgg's Neck on the premises of D. L. Lawrence, Esq., whose kindly comforts I shall ever remember with gratitude.

This exciting episode occurred at about the point where the Whitestone Bridge now touches Long Island. John Wise never ballooned over Long Island again.

It was thirteen years before Long Island again saw a balloon. In the meantime the Civil War had been fought and the country, rapidly recovering from the war, was astir with scientific projects. Among the less practical but more romantic of these projects was the proposal to cross the Atlantic Ocean by air. A young and daring aeronaut, W. H. Donaldson, with the help of Professor John Wise, had persuaded the *New York Daily Graphic* to finance the construction of a great balloon for this bold undertaking. In 1873 the balloon was built and named the *Daily Graphic*. Now for the first time Long Island was going to play a part in making aeronautical history. The Capitoline Grounds, which were located at Halsey Street between

Nostrand and Marcy Avenues in Brooklyn, were selected as the place of ascension. Professor Donaldson, in order to become familiar with the local winds and terrain, made a number of short flights from these Brooklyn grounds during September, 1873, in a smaller balloon named the *Magenta*. On one of these flights he floated east over Creedmoor and descended near the Long Island Rail Road depot at Queens. Two days later he made another ascent from the same Brooklyn grounds and after an hour landed again near Queens, where a crowd quickly gathered. As he still had considerable lift left, he invited the ladies to volunteer to make a captive ascent the length of the drag rope. He reports that he "had his hands full as all the ladies wanted to go".

Early in the morning of October 7th there was great activity at the Capitoline Grounds in Brooklyn. The inflation of the great balloon was proceeding rapidly, crowds were gathering, and by 8.30 it was ready. The crew of three climbed aboard the strange craft. They were Professor W. H. Donaldson, aeronaut, Alfred Ford, navigator, and George Lunt, *Daily Graphic* reporter. At 9.19 A. M. the great ship rose amid three rousing cheers, one for each member of the crew. At first it drifted to the north, but at 5000 feet it struck an eastward current and drifted out over Long Island; at 10 A. M. the speck disappeared from the sight of the watchers. It was not until 3 P. M. that afternoon that an accident report came in from New Canaan, Connecticut. The balloon had become lost in thickening storm clouds, had descended over unknown country only to find itself being swept along too fast for a landing, and Donaldson called for all hands to jump when they dipped to within 30 feet of the ground. Donaldson and Ford made the leap onto soft plowed ground, but Lunt hung on to the ropes and was carried away. Fortunately, Lunt hung on until the balloon swept close to a hilltop where he let go and landed safely in a tree top. The balloon was lost. The first transatlantic effort ended within 60 miles of its starting point, but Long Island had been marked for a place in transocean flying history, of which this was only the first faltering step.

One would expect this experience to cure Professor Donaldson, at least for a time, so it is with some surprise that we find in the records that even before the end of this same month, in fact, on October 29, 1873, Donaldson had taken off again,—this time from Newark, New Jersey, on another local ascent. The wind, however, carried him due east over New York Bay and on to Brooklyn. The descent was "quite exciting and dangerous. The balloon came down on Long Island, striking the ground with great force. It was drifting southward rapidly. The hooks failed to catch and for half an hour it went lifting and bumping over the ground, knocking down several people and creating great consternation". Donaldson in the wicker basket was dashed against a fence, "breaking four rails in twain". The balloon crossed the track of the Brooklyn, Central and Jamaica Railroad and came very near being "dashed to pieces by an oncoming train", but on it went, bouncing and dragging until it crashed against a house, "bringing to a sudden end its wild career". Donaldson came through with only cuts and bruises.



This might be considered a good point to end the story of the hazards of ballooning on Long Island, but that would not be fair either to Donaldson or Long Island. One more flight, all but forgotten, should be recorded. On July 21, 1874, Donaldson made an ascent from the "Hippodrome" in New York City. It was a fine summer day and the balloon drifted easily out over Long Island. He reached an altitude of 6000 feet, but at 5.40 P. M. brought the balloon down at Pearsall's (now Lynbrook). It being a pleasant, quiet evening, he did not deflate the balloon, but reports that "a lady whose curiosity was greater than her timidity was treated to a limited ascension, the balloon being secured by a rope". At 6.20 P. M. Donaldson reascended and drifted on the light sea breeze to the village of Hempstead, where he landed at 7 o'clock. After supper he made a moonlight ascension "for the benefit of the natives", making his final landing in a field four miles from the village. And so aeronautics first discovered Hempstead Plains and the "natives" of Nassau County had their first auspicious glimpse of the air age.

There is no need of recording the later balloon ascents and descents on the Island. They were not many, but even as late as 1905 an occasional balloon would pass southward over Flatbush and the young boys would all jump on their bicycles and pedal south to see its hurried landing on the broad Dutch farms of Flatlands before the breeze could carry it over the marshes to the ocean.

Certainly, nothing yet pointed to any great aeronautical future for Long Island. The natives were not too impressed by anything they had seen and the aeronauts did not care for Long Island. But by this time other things were happening in the field of aeronautics. The Wright brothers had made their first flights at Kitty Hawk in 1903 and there were occasional rumors that they were still improving their flying machine out at Dayton. Yet they gave no demonstration either to the public or to the press for several years and the significance of their work was, therefore, quite unappreciated.

By 1907 the public had become skeptical of the practicability or even the possibility of successful flying machines, but not so the scattered band of pioneers and inventors who, fired by the Wrights' achievements, worked harder than ever to solve the problem of flying with heavier-than-air machines. Although most attempts were failures, there were two groups besides the Wrights in 1907 who had achieved success. One was at Hammondsport where, under the leadership of Glenn Curtiss, great progress was being made, and the other was in France, where Santos Dumont, Farman, Voisin, and Bleriot had each made and flown his own machine. The newspapers carried a great deal about the progress which the French were making.

It was great news, therefore, in July, 1908, when the announcement was made that Henri Farman, the famous French flyer, was bringing his airplane to New York and would make a series of public flights. The Brighton Beach racetrack was chosen as the site and, although only 840 yards long, it was ample for the exhibition flights which were mainly to show the public that the machine could actually leave the ground. The first day, Saturday, August 1st, about 8000

persons paid the entrance fee only to be disappointed. It was too windy for Farman to risk flying, so the people were given "wind cheques". On August 2nd about 1000 turned up and were rewarded by seeing one short flight down the length of the racetrack. It was the first airplane flight on Long Island.

During the succeeding week Farman made several short flights on each of the few days when there was no wind, but the public had lost interest. The attendance averaged only a few hundred persons and the exhibition was a financial failure. Nevertheless, it was a great spur to the local boys. It touched a spark and from that day on, Long Island was in the aviation business.

On one of the days of Farman's exhibitions, young Lawrence B. Sperry of Flatbush, not quite sixteen years old, thrilled by this opportunity to see an aeroplane, had taken his motorcycle and arrived at Brighton Beach at 4 A. M. to be sure not to miss the flight. Early morning was the best time to fly because of the quiet air. He saw Farman warm up the engine, roll down the field and make a single short hop at an altitude of about 10 feet. That was enough for him. From then on, his life was devoted to aviation. He started building his first airplane that same summer in the cellar of his home. During the next fifteen years he was one of the great contributors to the progress of aviation, and all of his achievements belong to Long Island.

There was now so much interest in the possibilities of flying that a group of enthusiastic young men, all with plans for building their own machines, organized the New York Aeronautic Society and selected the old, deserted Morris Park racetrack in the Bronx as their base of operations. On Election Day, November 3, 1908, this group courageously put on an "air show", but their enthusiasm far outran their ability to perform. Twenty thousand witnessed the show, but most of them climbed through holes in the old racetrack fence, so the "gate" was not as large as expected. There were at least half a dozen flying machines of various queer types on exhibition, but as one report stated, "none of the apparatuses flew". A Mr. Lesh went up in a glider towed by an automobile, but a gust of wind caused the glider to crash and Mr. Lesh broke his ankle. It was decided that flying events should be called off and the day was ended with motorcycle races. Aviation was still a most uncertain entertainment.

During the next year, even though there were about twenty airplanes in various stages of construction, the members at the "Morris Park Volery" decided to pool enough money to buy at least one airplane that they were sure would fly. A committee visited Glenn Curtiss, who had built several successful machines. Curtiss was so surprised and pleased at the appearance of a customer for an airplane that he said he would design and build a new plane for them. Thus was closed the sale of the first commercial airplane in America.

In June, 1909, the new plane was delivered at Morris Park and Glenn Curtiss came down to demonstrate it. He made several short flights around the racetrack. Its performance was excellent. The machine was accepted and christened the *Gold Bug*, but the Bronx



was no place for aviation, so Glenn Curtiss suggested that they look over on Long Island for a place where he could demonstrate its performance. He was also anxious to make an attempt to win the Scientific American trophy which had recently been offered for the first flight of 25 kilometers (15½ miles). Curtiss and several others drove out on Long Island and were greatly pleased to find the large level stretches of Hempstead Plains. They chose a field east of Mineola as "a nice flat place". There, in the early morning hours of July 7, 1909, Curtiss made the flight. To witness this through the eyes of an old Long Islander, the following story is quoted from the reminiscences of the late Valentine W. Smith of Far Rockaway.

I recollect an early morning in the summer of 1909, before any wind would be likely to arise, Mrs. Smith and I drove to Mineola to see Glenn Curtiss attempt to fly an airplane. This airplane looked like an enlarged box kite. The driver's seat projected out in front and the engine with the propeller, set to push forward, was at the back. It was an ideal morning with no wind stirring, and at sunrise Mr. Curtiss wheeled the machine to the east side of the Fair Grounds, and went up a little higher than the tree tops, and circled around for half an hour. At the end of that time the plane fairly collapsed from the excessive strain, but he had remained in the air just long enough to win the prize of \$10,000.

That early morning flight was truly a milestone in Long Island aviation. The airplane had finally discovered its natural home, Hempstead Plains, a friendly ground over which it could strengthen its pinions. The hum of the airplane has swelled over the Plains from that morning to the present time.

In the next few weeks on this same Mineola field, Curtiss, before returning to Hammondsport, taught Charles F. Willard of the Aeronautic Society to fly. On August 13th, Willard made the first extensive cross-country flight over the Plains—Mineola, Garden City, Westbury, Hicksville—and then a forced landing. It proved the advantage of the Plains, since forced landings were a most common occurrence in these early years and here they were comparatively safe.

On many a pleasant afternoon in those early days, Washington Avenue, which was the western boundary of this field, would be lined with motor cars laden with the admiring public. When one of the flyers would bob his plane up and down like a gentle roller coaster, they would all honk their horns in enthusiastic applause.

The year 1909 marks the Hudson-Fulton celebration. On September 29th, Wilbur Wright gave his first public flying demonstration to New York City. Taking off from Governor's Island, he flew around the Statue of Liberty and back to the Island. On October 4th he staged a splendid flight all the way up to Grant's Tomb and back, flying over the Hudson River. This was the climax of the celebration and the first airplane flight the cities of New York and Brooklyn had ever witnessed.

By 1910, most of the flying activity around New York had settled at the Mineola field. Flying schools were starting up. Many inventors were still working to build their first airplanes. Dr. Henry Waldon flew the first American-made monoplane. Clifford B. Harmon, sportsman and aeronautical enthusiast, made a flight from Mineola, over Port Washington, across the Sound, and landed at Greenwich, Connecticut. For this great achievement, Harmon was presented the *Country Life in America* trophy.

In August, 1910, Glenn Curtiss, McCurdy, Willard and Bud Mars held a series of flying exhibitions at the old Sheepshead Bay race-track. Major Rieber, a balloonist of the Signal Corps stationed at Governor's Island, was an interested spectator the first day. He discussed with Glenn Curtiss the idea of adding a military feature to the program by having an officer fire a service rifle from an airplane in flight. Curtiss at first was afraid this would be too dangerous; the rifleman would have to sit on the edge of the wing and would not be able to hold on to both the airplane and the rifle at the same time. Also, it was feared that the recoil of the rifle might upset the plane. In those days there was little knowledge of airplane stability. But Curtiss finally consented to the experiment and Lt. J. E. Fickel of the Infantry was given the assignment. A white target was spread on the ground and Curtiss, with Fickel as passenger, flew over it at an altitude of about 100 feet. Fickel fired as they passed over the target. Two bullet holes were found in the target, according to Lt. Fickel's official report. As far as is known, this is the first rifle firing from an airplane in flight. Lt. Fickel later transferred to the Aviation Section and rose to the rank of Major General in the Air Corps.

There was one other important "first" which can be credited to this obscure air show at Sheepshead Bay. On August 27th, J. A. McCurdy, one of the original group of Curtiss flyers, took aloft in his plane a cumbersome spark wireless transmitter and sent the following message to the ground:

Horton — Another chapter in aerial achievement is recorded in the sending of this wireless message from an airplane in flight.

McCURDY.

The biggest event of the year 1910, however, was the great International Aerial Tournament held at Belmont Park, Long Island, October 22nd to 31st. This was the first international air meet held in America, with representatives from England, France and the United States competing for the many prizes. The sensational Statue of Liberty race for the Thomas Fortune Ryan \$10,000 prize was won by Count de Lesseps of France. Claude Graham-White of England beat him home, but was disqualified for fouling a pylon. Graham-White, however, had won the Gordon Bennett \$5000 speed contest in which the Frenchman, Le Blanc, had surpassed all speed records, 68 miles per hour, only to be disqualified by crashing at the finish.

It was during the Belmont Park Meet that Ralph Johnston and Arch Hoxsey, two of the most skillful and daring American birdmen,



became known as the "Star Dust Twins". Both were striving to win the \$5000 altitude prize. Every day they rose a little higher, each seeking to outfly the other. Late one calm afternoon they both took off for another attempt. For an hour they spiralled upward. The sun went down, but neither would be the first to give up. The contest ended only as the fuel tanks ran dry. First one and then the other sputtered into silence as the anxious crowd waited in the dim twilight. Both machines landed safely in a Long Island potato patch. Jonhston won the altitude contest with a world's record—9714 feet.

This meet was a great success with plenty of thrills for the spectators, as luck, skill and daring all played equally important parts in the flying of the day. Furthermore, aviation was at last receiving recognition. The spectators at the Belmont Meet included Lieutenant Governor Timothy L. Woodruff, Thomas Fortune Ryan, Clarence Mackay, and many others who represented society and capital.

By the year 1911, the birdmen were truly venturing out. Cross-country flight held the lure. Many flight records from this place to that were being made, but perhaps the outstanding flight of the year was that of Calbraith P. Rodgers, who started for California from Mineola Field on September 17, 1911. The remarkable thing was that he finally got there, even if it did take 49 days, many of which were needed to patch up and rebuild the airplane after forced landings. In fact, Rodgers had to spend some days in a hospital for repairs on himself after one of the crack-ups. On December 10th he arrived at Long Beach, California, completing the first transcontinental trip ever made by air. From that day on, the transcontinental record has been whittled down a little at a time until, as this is written, the jet-propelled P-80 has brought it to 4 hours and 15 minutes from California to Mitchel Field, Long Island, within sight of the same place from which Rodgers took off thirty-five years earlier.

In the Fall of 1911, the Second International Air Meet was held on Long Island. This time the site chosen was the new Nassau Boulevard air field on the edge of Garden City, just north of the Long Island Rail Road tracks at the Nassau Boulevard station. The following paragraph from *Town and Country* magazine (1911) indicates how the flyers had come to consider Long Island.

The birdmen flock to Long Island as instinctively as partridges to a thorn grove. The mile-wide plain running down the center of the Island is a natural homing ground for the flyers. It is now time for the pick of the aviators of the United States and Europe to make their second annual migration to this attractive piece of country.

At this meet there were again many prizes and many entries. The site was colorful, as there was a row of over twenty small hangars, each housing one contestant and his airplane. His country's flag flew over the hangar. Various races and contests were held each morning and afternoon for a week, but the outstanding event that made aviation history was a small side show which the Aero Club arranged with the Post Office Department. Earl Ovington, one of the

popular local flyers, was sworn in as airmail pilot No. 1 by Postmaster General Frank H. Hitchcock. A temporary mail station was set up at the field. On the first day of the air show, the Postmaster General himself handed the first airmail bag to Ovington in his Bleriot monoplane. He placed it between his knees and took off for Mineola, about six miles away, where he dropped it near the Mineola Post Office. In several flights he carried 640 letters and 1280 post cards. These pieces of mail, each with a special official cancellation, are now much sought for and prized by stamp collectors—the first official air mail in America.

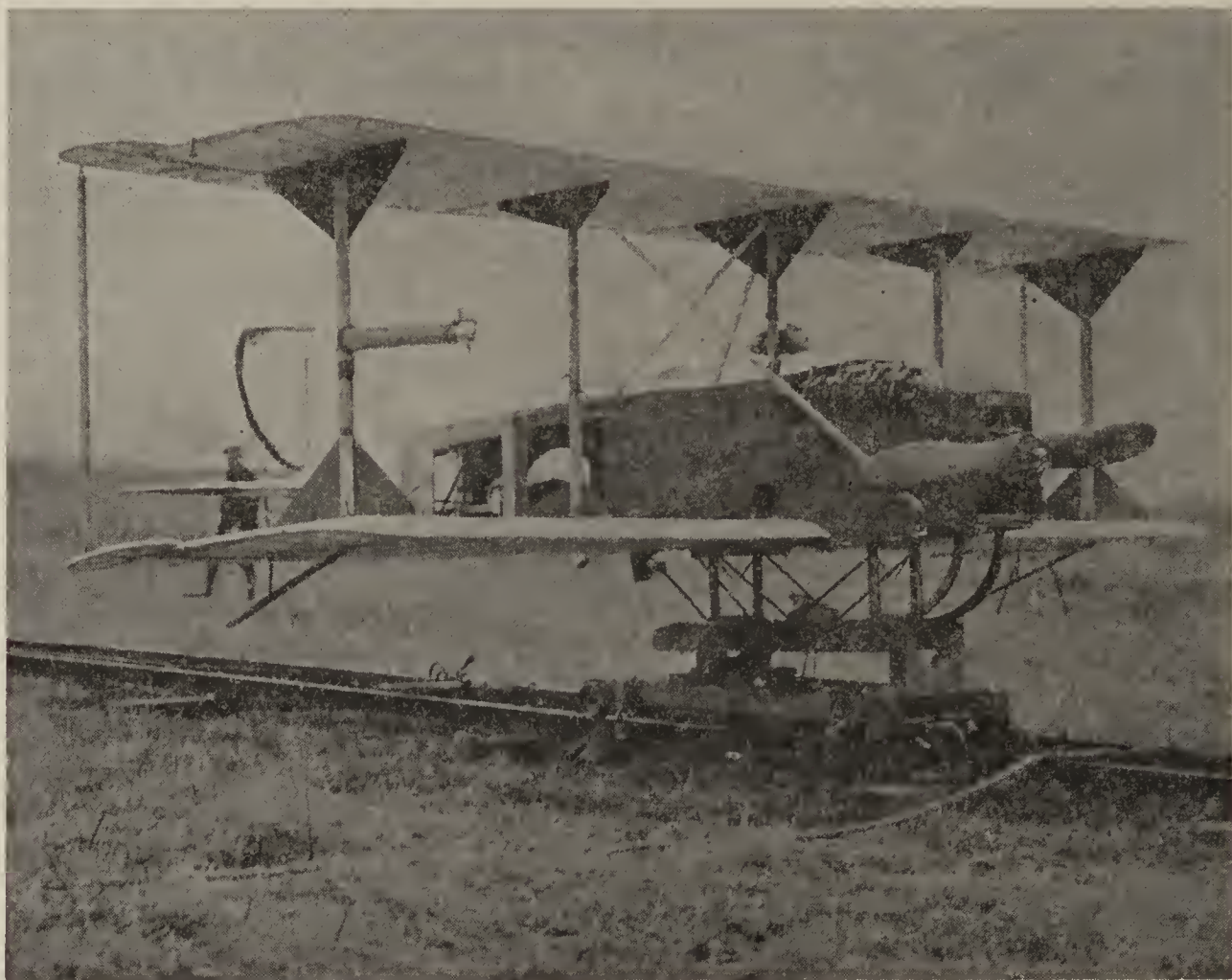
Another feature of this meet at Nassau Boulevard which should be noticed is the first appearance of Army aviation. In 1910, the United States Army possessed one Wright airplane and Lt. B. D. Foulois was the only Army officer qualified and assigned to fly it. He was ordered to the air meet at Belmont Park in October, 1910, as an observer. One year later, in September, 1911, at the Nassau Boulevard Air Meet, the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps was again represented, this time, however, by two participants, Lt. Milling and Lt. H. H. Arnold (later to become General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the United States Air Forces in World War II). Arnold and Milling were to pilot Burgess-Wright machines for a military demonstration. At this time the main use which Army officers saw for airplanes was reconnaissance. Consequently, the demonstration which the two lieutenants gave was to fly out over the surrounding countryside and locate several bodies of troops from Fort Totten that had been concealed in the nearby woods for the occasion. Lt. Milling also set a new endurance record during this meet by carrying two passengers for 1 hour and 54 minutes. This was the first participation of the United States Army in any air meet.

The years 1912 and 1913 made very little news in aviation. There seemed to be a lull of uncertainty after the first years of success. The birdmen had proved to the public that they could fly. They had set impressive records, such as Le Blanc's speed record of 68 miles an hour, Johnston's altitude record of 9714 feet. Earl Ovington had demonstrated the possibility of carrying mail by airplane, yet nothing came of the experiment. Flying schools had started up at both the Nassau Boulevard and Mineola flying fields. The only way for the airplane to earn money, however, seemed to be by exhibition flying or by organizing flying circuses. A good example of the circus days of flying was staged by Lincoln Beachey at Brighton Beach during this period. "Come rain, shine or cyclone", his manager said, "see the death defying, spine chilling, hair raising performance". For Lincoln Beachey in a new Curtiss racing airplane was going to compete with Barney Oldfield in his Fiat Cyclone racing car. The exhibitions proved to be thrilling. Beachey flew so close over the head of Oldfield that Barney could reach up and almost touch him. In addition to the racing, Beachey looped the loop and did many other reckless stunts very close to the ground.

Even the growth of the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps was surprisingly slow during these years. With war clouds rolling up in



Europe, neither the Army nor Congress had any realization of the importance of military aviation. In March, 1915, seven months after the first World War had started in Europe, Congress appropriated only \$200,000 for all aviation for the year. Two years later, when the United States finally declared war, on April 6, 1917, our Air Force consisted of only 35 qualified pilots, 55 airplanes, and 4 flying schools. One of these schools was at Mineola.



*The Sperry-Curtiss Aerial Torpedo, world's first guided missile, on its launching rails at Amityville, 1918*

Undoubtedly one of the main deterrents to progress in aviation during these few years was the high accident rate among the pioneer flyers. Airplanes were treacherous and unstable. The pilots were daredevils trying to earn a living by stunt flying. The combination was tragic and by 1913 most of the well-known flyers, such as Johnston, Hoxsey and Beachey, had been killed.

One of the greatest problems in connection with the early airplanes was this question of stability. The wide variation in the designs of the early airplanes was due to the quest for more stability, but without much success. The pilot could never relax in flying or his ship would go out of control. This problem became so serious that the French Government in 1913 offered a prize of 50,000 francs for a stable airplane. Over eighty competitors from all parts of the world



entered the competition. Among these entries was one from Long Island. Lawrence Sperry, now 22 years old, had been working with his father, Elmer A. Sperry, on the idea of applying an automatic stabilizer to an airplane instead of redesigning the airplane itself. Elmer A. Sperry had just recently founded the Sperry Gyroscope Company in Brooklyn and was interested in helping his air-minded son by trying to stabilize the airplane with gyroscopes. Together they worked out a design and installed it on a Curtiss flying boat. Lawrence did the test flying and by the Spring of 1914 he was ready for the competition to be held in Paris.

Lawrence made the trip to France alone, taking with him his plane and gyro stabilizer. He assembled it on the bank of the Seine with the aid of a French mechanic and started the drastic tests. Most of the competitors with various freak designs were quickly eliminated, the contest came down to a few. Lawrence arranged a special demonstration flight. Taking his mechanic with him as passenger, he had him climb out on one wing while in flight and as they flew low past the judges' stand, Lawrence also stood up and raised both hands above his head. This was indeed convincing, nothing like it had ever been seen before. The airplane could really fly by itself. Sperry brought the prize back to Long Island.

Within a month war started in Europe. Safe and level flying with automatic stabilizers was temporarily postponed. The airmen were soon flying dangerously in dog fights that included all kinds of maneuvers. But the automatic stabilizer did not die. Instead, it went into the secret category and became one of the great secret projects of World War I.

When the United States entered the war, both the Army and Navy were interested in the possibility of using the gyro-stabilizer to control a pilotless plane loaded with explosives and guided by radio. In those days it was called the "aerial torpedo". Now it would be classified as a "guided missile". Glenn Curtiss designed a very small, simple plane which could be launched by catapult and had no landing wheels. Sperry installed the stabilizer and control devices. A secret test field was selected on the edge of Great South Bay near Amityville and there, during 1918, many successful flights were made with the first guided missiles the world had ever known. As it was, of course, too expensive to lose an airplane every time it was tested, Sperry would ride out as a passenger on the missile until it had reached the target over the ocean, he would then take over the controls and fly it back. Sperry even flew the final torpedo design which was not built for a human pilot. This he had to land on skids on the ice of Great South Bay. The war ended, however, before any of these weapons were actually used and the project slumbered in the secret files until reawakened by World War II.

The main aviation history of World War I on Long Island, however, centered around the Mineola air field. Just prior to the war, real estate dealers displaced the flyers from their old field east of the Fair Grounds in order to develop that section. A new field was acquired about a mile farther to the east. This field was at first known



as Mineola Air Field or Hempstead Plains Aviation Field. In 1915 the New York National Guard organized an active aviation unit at this field. In 1916, Colonel Kilner and Major Bolling took over operation of this field as a military post and gave it the name of Hazelhurst Field. It was named after Sergeant Hazelhurst, the first non-commissioned officer to be killed in an Army airplane accident.

Under Col. Kilner a fine squadron of flyers was trained in spite of many handicaps of inadequate airplanes and material. When the United States declared war, it was one of the few squadrons that the United States had ready to go abroad to fight. It included sons of many prominent New York and Long Island families. Among them



*Enlisted Men's Club, Mitchel Field*

was Quentin Roosevelt, son of Theodore Roosevelt of Oyster Bay. He was one of the first American trained flyers to fly over the enemy lines in France. He was shot down and killed on July 14, 1918. Soon after that, the name of Hazelhurst Field was changed to Roosevelt Field in his honor. As Roosevelt Field it has had a remarkable history both in war and peace.

A majority of the American flyers of World War I were trained at or passed through this field before going to France. It was one of the great war-time fields. As soon as the war was over, however, the Army had the problem of deciding which of the numerous war-time fields they should make into permanent bases. It was decided that instead of holding Roosevelt Field, they would utilize a large tract of land just to the south which had a greater acreage. This land had been leased by the Army in 1917 as a general supply camp for concentrating and distributing supplies to the surrounding military air fields and training camps. About all that could be said for it was that it was large and flat. Much had to be done before it could be a good air field. Nevertheless, the Army acquired it and set July 16,



1918, as the day to formally dedicate the field. Just before this date fell due, Major John Purroy Mitchel, Army pilot and ex-Mayor of New York City, was killed in an air accident while training at an Army field in Louisiana. It was immediately decided to christen the field Mitchel Field, so with hardly a usable runway, the old supply field of World War I started its career with another great name, and in the past thirty years has grown to be one of the finest military fields of the country.

After the Armistice in November, 1918, aviation was left in a state of suspended animation. The world now realized its great military potentialities, but with the rush toward disarmament and economy, peace-time aviation was left only with a large surplus of Army training airplanes and a lot of ex-Army flyers who still wanted to fly. On Long Island the many air fields reverting to peace-time flying were busy with flying clubs, aviation schools and barnstorming groups, but the activity was all for fun or for exhibition; there seemed to be no practical demand for commercial flying.

True, airmail was being given another trial. The Post Office Department had inaugurated its first intercity airmail service between New York and Washington. Belmont Park served as the New York terminus. Later a New York to Boston run was inaugurated and then a New York to Chicago schedule. All of these first runs used Belmont Park as the New York terminal, but its size and location were not suitable, so the Post Office Department, after temporarily using Roosevelt Field for a few months, finally established Hadley Field near New Brunswick, New Jersey, as the airmail terminal. The struggle was pretty severe. The mail was quite irregular and not much time was saved. Only the loyal optimists and the enthusiasts used the service. The public was not sold.

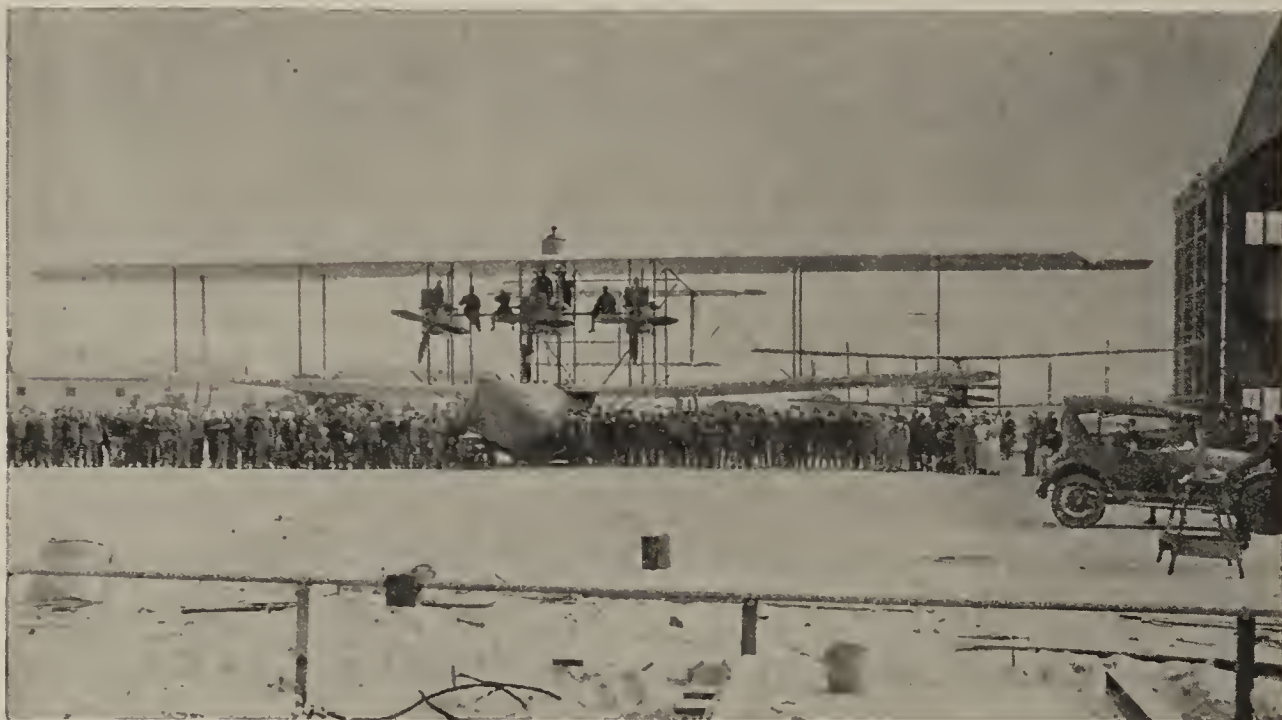
The Navy was the first to organize a project to show the great advances that had been made in aviation during the war years. A secret Navy project had been under way in the Curtiss Engineering Laboratories at Garden City for several years. A huge 3-engine airplane had been designed and was being built there, which was of sufficient power and range to fly across the Atlantic. It was to be a big surprise for the Germans, but the armistice came before it was completed. Work was not stopped, however, and in the spring of 1919 parts for three of the big ships were taken from Garden City down to the Naval Air Station at Rockaway Beach, where they were assembled in a large hangar. By April the three sister ships, NC1, NC3 and NC4, were ready for test flights.

On May 8, 1919, all three of the big 3-engined flying boats took off from Jamaica Bay on the first leg of their flight and flew to Trepassy Bay, Newfoundland. On May 16th, they started across the Atlantic for the Azores. Mechanical troubles caused the NC1 and NC3 to drop out, but the NC4 with Lt. Commander Albert C. Read in command and Walter Hinton as pilot, reached Horta on May 17th, flew on to Lisbon on May 27th, and completed the trip to Plymouth, England, on May 31st. They flew altogether a total of 4514 miles.



Long Island can indisputably claim as its own this first successful transatlantic project.

By quite a coincidence, the British were able to return this courtesy visit across the Atlantic within five weeks' time, and thus even up the score by achieving a transatlantic "first" of their own. On July 6, 1919, the great British Dirigible R-34 completed the first lighter-than-air-ship flight across the Atlantic Direct from England it came non-stop, cruised around New York City, and then moored at Roosevelt Field. A rigid dirigible was a new sight not only to Long Islanders but to America. Thousands of people drove out on the



*The Navy Airplane NC4, built at Garden City, assembled at Rockaway Beach; first airplane to fly across the Atlantic, May, 1919*

Island to see the huge silver fish slowly swaying at its moorings in the center of Roosevelt Field. At night floodlights illuminated it and the public stayed to admire. It remained there for several days until the weather was right for the return trip and then one evening it rose, circled New York in a farewell gesture, and was off again to England. Probably no other aeronautical occasion on Long Island ever attracted so many people. It was a majestic sight.

Before the end of 1919 a wealthy hotel owner, Raymond Orteig, probably inspired by these first transatlantic events, posted a prize of \$25,000 for the first non-stop airplane flight between Paris and New York. The offer did not stir any excitement at the time; the feat was considered impossible. Activities turned in other directions. The offer was forgotten.

On Long Island, the spotlight swung over onto Mitchel Field, the new Army air base just south of Roosevelt Field. It had now acquired some fine new hangars and several good long runways. The most interesting news of the early nineteen twenties seems to center

there. Many new projects were afoot. In mid-July, 1920, four Army airplanes under the command of Captain St. Clair Street took off from Mitchel Field for Nome, Alaska. By mid-August they were back again, having covered 9327 miles and having learned a great deal about air navigation. In November, Major C. C. Moseley established a new American speed record of 178 miles per hour at Mitchel Field by winning the first Pulitzer Race.

During the year 1922 the Army constructed a model airway between Mitchel Field and Dayton, Ohio. This was a most important development. Cross-country flying alone was not sufficient for regular flights. Emergency landing fields, markers, beacons, coordinated weather reports were all essential to regular flying. Even the term "airway" was a new word coined at this time. This work was of great aid to the Post Office Department, who were just preparing to set up the first regular airmail routes across the country.

The outstanding event of the year 1923 was the first non-stop flight across the continent. On May 2nd, Lieut. J. A. Macready and Lieut. O. Kelly took off from Mitchel Field in a large single-engine Fokker airplane, the T-2, with a heavy load of gas and headed west. They flew all through that night and twenty-six hours and fifty minutes later they landed in San Diego, California. This was an important milestone in the history of transcontinental flight.

The record, however, did not stand for long. In the early dawn of June 23, 1924, one of the longest days of the year, Lieut. Russell Maughan took off from Mitchel Field in a Curtiss pursuit plane which had been built and especially groomed at the Garden City Curtiss plant. He raced the sun across the continent and landed at San Francisco in the late twilight of the same day. The elapsed time was 21 hours and 44 minutes. The flight was known as the Dawn-to-Dusk flight.

In 1925 the Pulitzer Trophy Race was again held at Mitchel Field. Lieut. Cyrus Bettis flew the latest Garden City product, a new Curtiss racing plane, and set a new world's speed record at 249 miles per hour. So by watching Mitchel Field during these few years, we have seen speed, range and endurance climb to a point where the airplane had truly become efficient.

Mitchel Field, however, settled down after 1925 to a routine Army life, with regular and unspectacular flying. So we must seek some other place to swing the spotlight.

Things had been quite normal during these years at Roosevelt Field. Schools and flying services were prospering. New and better types of planes had come along, but there was no outstanding news. Roosevelt Field had become just another local field with no prospects for world fame. But along in the Fall of 1926, Capt. Rene Fonck, the brilliant French war ace, came to Roosevelt Field with a Sikorsky biplane and his crew of three. He announced his plan to fly non-stop to Paris in an attempt to win the almost forgotten Orteig prize. On September 15th, with a very heavy load of gas, the attempt was made. The plane was too heavy. It roared down the runway but could not get off; it crashed at the far end and burst into flames. Capt. Fonck



and Lieut. Curtin were saved, but the other two crew members were killed.

Even though this attempt failed, it called attention to the fact that the non-stop transatlantic flight, though still a gamble, was no longer a fantastic idea. Plans were being hatched on both sides of the Atlantic. In Paris, Capt. Charles Nungesser and Capt. F. Coli, two famous French war aces, were preparing carefully for an attempt from Paris to New York.



*Curtiss Navy Racer with "Casey" Jones, Curtiss test pilot, winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize; built at Garden City*

At Roosevelt Field, Commander Byrd, having just successfully flown over the North Pole, was preparing his big tri-motor airplane, the *America*. He had gathered a fine crew and his preparations were thorough and painstaking. Clarence Chamberlin was also at Roosevelt Field experimenting with a new Wright-powered Bellanca which was owned by Mr. Charles Levine. Chamberlin and Bert Acosta took this plane up from Roosevelt Field one Spring day to fly back and forth over Long Island until the gas ran out. It was two days later that they landed again at Roosevelt Field with the world's endurance record of 51 hours and 11 minutes. This performance convinced Mr. Levine that his Bellanca, *Miss Columbia*, could win the Orteig prize, so he had Chamberlin make preparations for the great trial.

With so much stirring on both sides of the Atlantic, public interest in the rivalry and the preparations was rising to a high pitch. The month of May, 1927, brought real drama, probably the greatest

in the history of aviation. On May 7th, Nungesser and Coli took off from Le Bourget, Paris, in their *White Bird* and started across the ocean. There were days of suspense, but no report of the flyers. Floyd Bennett flew from Roosevelt Field to Newfoundland and searched the sea for several days, but no trace of the French flyers was ever found.

At Roosevelt Field, test flights and final preparations were being made with both the *America* and *Miss Columbia*. On May 10th, however, there was unexpected news. A young airmail pilot by the name of Charles A. Lindbergh was flying eastward from San Diego, California, in a new Ryan monoplane named *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Lindbergh stopped at St. Louis overnight so that his sponsors might have a look at his shiny new ship. Then he flew on and landed at Roosevelt Field on the evening of May 12th. He modestly announced that he was going to fly on to Paris. With no crew or mechanics, he quietly checked over his airplane, spent the nights in the nearby Garden City Hotel, and kept in daily, almost hourly touch with Dr. Kimball, the New York City weather man. For several days the reports were very bad, but on May 19th, even though it was raining hard, Lindbergh learned from Dr. Kimball that weather over the Atlantic was improving. With no hesitation Lindbergh decided to go even though Dr. Kimball did not recommend it. He was at the field before daybreak. It was overcast and still raining, the field was soaking wet. The plane was towed to the extreme west end of the field and at 7:52 A. M. he took off into the gray eastern sky. Somehow the whole setting of the unknown youngster taking off alone with so much confidence and so little show where war aces and famous pilots had failed and where others were still busy with their elaborate preparations, electrified the world. There were hours of charged suspense and then the news. Lindbergh had landed at Le Bourget Airport after 33 hours 30 minutes of flying. He was greeted by a huge and wildly enthusiastic crowd. In the succeeding days he was cheered and feted and written about until even the statesmen of Europe and America considered it a phenomenon. The United States Government rose to the occasion when President Coolidge ordered the cruiser *USS Memphis* to bring the flyer home in triumph. The reverberations of Lindbergh's flight lasted several years and had a tremendous effect in advancing aviation.

Back at Roosevelt Field, Chamberlin and Byrd, disappointed, had to modify their plans. Neither one abandoned his project, however. Chamberlin and Levine made arrangements to fly to an unnamed destination (later found to be Berlin). On June 4th the *Miss Columbia* took off from the same runway that Lindbergh had used and left everyone guessing as to where they would land. Two days later the news came that they had crossed the Atlantic safely, but had had to make a forced landing in Germany at Eisleben when they ran out of gas. They had covered, however, 3911 miles in 42 hours and 45 minutes, a world record for distance which stood for some years.

Finally, on June 29, 1927, Commander Byrd, after being delayed both by hard luck and very thorough testing, was ready to start with



the *America*. He had as crew Bert Acosta, Bernt Balchen and Lieut. Noville. At 5.30 A. M. they took off, but hard luck still pursued them; they had fogs and bad weather all of the way. They could not find Le Bourget and finally landed in the water just off the coast of France at Ver-sur-Mer after 42 hours in the air.

Before the end of this great year, Roosevelt Field launched one more attempt at transatlantic flying. On October 10th, George Halderman and Ruth Elder took off in a Stinson monoplane. They encountered storms and finally came down in the ocean 360 miles from the Azores. They were rescued by a Dutch oil tanker.

In looking back over the year 1927, of the six attempts to fly across the Atlantic, Lindbergh was the only one who reached his announced destination. All of the later attempts only enhanced his prestige as the premier flyer.

Long range flights, however, were no longer unusual, but Long Island continued to be the springboard from which many long flights started, both over the continent and over the ocean. Occasional records were bettered, but for a few years nothing sensational occurred. Aviation was slowly assimilating what had been learned from these great flights into standard designs which could be used for commercial flying.

One of the most serious problems that the long-distance flying and the scheduled airmail had brought up was the difficulty of blind flying. No longer was fair-weather flying sufficient. Further advance in aviation must wait on the improvement of blind-flying techniques.

Here Long Island stepped into a new role. Almost without outside help it undertook the problem. Harry F. Guggenheim of Sands Point, Long Island, seeing the need, endowed a project for the study of blind flying and blind landing. The place selected for the work was Mitchel Field and the man assigned to carry on the flight experiments was Lieut. James C. Doolittle. New instruments had to be developed. Doolittle did not have to go far. There was the Sperry Gyroscope Company in Brooklyn, the first company in this country to make airplane instruments. There was the Pioneer Instrument Company of Brooklyn, founded in 1919 by three young engineers who had first worked with Sperry and who later successfully built up the largest airplane instrument business in the country. And there was Paul Kollsman, a fine instrument builder who was just starting a small company in Elmhurst, Long Island, and who knew how to build a more sensitive altimeter than anyone else. Doolittle worked with all three and by the Summer of 1929 he had a small plane equipped with some instruments which the world had never seen before, and a hood which he could draw over the cockpit so that he could not see outside the plane. Among the instruments on the board, all of which were made on Long Island, were three new ones: a sensitive altimeter made by Kollsman, a gyro-horizon and a directional gyro made by Sperry. There were also the gyro turn indicator, air speed indicator, rate of climb indicator, and aperiodic magnetic compass made by Pioneer. With this set of flight instruments and a radio direction finder, Doolittle was ready to make a new kind of pioneering flight.

On September 24, 1929, with only a small audience of interested engineers, Doolittle climbed in his plane, drew the hood over the cockpit and took off on the first all-blind flight in history. He climbed steadily out of Mitchel Field, made a wide turn and flew down wind several miles; then he turned toward the field and carefully let down on a long slanting approach, using only his radio direction finder and his flight instruments. It was a long minute both for him and the



*Wiley Post and the "Winnie Mae" at Floyd Bennett Field just before his solo trip around the world, 1933*

observers as he cautiously felt for the ground as the plane soared over the field at only a few feet elevation. Finally, the wheels touched and he rolled to a stop. A new chapter in aviation had been started. Within a year the new blind-flying instruments were being installed in all airmail planes and scheduled flying greatly improved its reliability and safety. During the next ten years these three Long Island instrument companies, by supplying over ninety per cent of all the airplane instruments used in America, were a large contributing factor in building up the great air transport systems of the country.

The availability of blind-flying instruments soon brought a second wave of spectacular long-distance flights. It started with a white Lockheed airplane named the *Winnie Mae* in June, 1931. Wiley Post, a sturdy pilot from Oklahoma, and Harold Gatty, an experienced navigator from Australia, equipped their plane with all of the new



blind-flying instruments. Their plan was to fly around the world. At 5 A. M. on the morning of June 23rd they took off from Roosevelt Field for Harbor Grace, their first stop. For the next week the newspapers traced their progress across Europe, Russia, Siberia, Alaska and back to Roosevelt Field, where they landed at 8.47 P. M. on July 1st. They had been away from the home field only 8 days, 15 hours, 51 minutes and had traveled 15,128 miles. It was a splendid record and many believed it would hold for some years.

Before the end of July two more flights were ready to take off from Long Island. This time, however, preparations were being carried on at a brand new airport on the edge of Jamaica Bay, Floyd Bennett Field, which had just been dedicated.

In 1929 the City of New York had become dissatisfied with Newark Airport as the terminal for its air mail and air passengers. It had made a strong bid to relocate its air terminal at the western end of Jamaica Bay, including Barren Island and the surrounding marshland. After a tremendous job of pumping in 14 million cubic yards of sand and leveling it off, a splendid airport was produced at the southern end of Flatbush Avenue. Large hangars and a fine administration building were erected. The field was dedicated on May 23, 1931, with great ceremony and named Floyd Bennett Field. The airlines, however, could not see the economy of moving over from Newark and consequently this fine new airport awaited with some uncertainty its future. The Navy moved into a part of it. The Coast Guard, the Aviation Section of the New York Police Department, several flying schools and airplane maintenance companies filled the spacious hangars. But it was not long in finding fame which outshone even Newark Airport, that overworked old terminal which it was built to replace. Such fine facilities and long, wide runways without the confusion of heavy scheduled air traffic were ideal for special flights.

The spotlight that had illuminated Roosevelt Field during the late 1920s suddenly swung over onto the glistening runways of Floyd Bennett. On July 28, 1931, by coincidence, two Bellanca airplanes were poised to take off on great flights. In the first one, Russell Boardman and John Polando were set to try for a new non-stop distance record. They took off and flew eastward on a great circle course for Turkey. 50 hours and 8 minutes later they landed at Istanbul after flying 5011 miles. It was a new world record.

The second plane, with Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon, took off the same day in an attempt to beat the Post-Gatty round-the-world record. They made fast time to Croydon Airport, London, and through Europe and Russia. They were, however, arrested in Japan for flying over Japanese fortifications. After their release they flew on across the Pacific back to the United States, but it was October 15th before they got back.

On July 5, 1932, two more intrepid pilots took off from Floyd Bennett for another try at the Post-Gatty record. James Mattern and Bennett Griffin made the try in their Lockheed Vega *Century of Progress*. They got as far as Minsk, where they crashed on a take-off and had to abandon the flight.

Mattern, however, went right to work to try it again and on June 3, 1933, we find him again taking off from Floyd Bennett Field, this time alone. He got as far as Anadyr, Siberia, where he made a forced landing in the vast uninhabited muskeg and was lost for over three weeks. Coast Guard surface craft and Russian rescue planes searched the bleak Arctic Circle for him. He was found just in time by some Eskimos as he was floating himself down a river on a raft, almost starved.

While Mattern was still lost in Siberia, Floyd Bennett Field was honored by a visit of the largest and most colorful air armada that ever came to the United States. Twenty-four large, twin-fuselaged Savoia Marchetti seaplanes under the command of General Balbo of Italy, stopped off for several days to pay their respects to New York. They were on their way from Orbetello, Italy, to the Century of Progress at Chicago. The brilliant red-white-and-green airplanes attracted much attention and many sightseers thronged Floyd Bennett Field.

In one corner of the Field at this very time, but unnoticed by the crowd, was a familiar white airplane being groomed for another flight. Some new apparatus was being installed on the *Winnie Mae*. Wiley Post had not been satisfied with his first trip around the world. He was anxious to try it again in an attempt to beat his own record. This time, however, he wanted to do it alone.

The greatest problem was the element of human endurance. He knew that at Sperry's in Brooklyn a new design of an automatic pilot was almost perfected. If he could have that automatic as his co-pilot he could do the trick. It was finally arranged and the first model of the modern automatic gyropilot was hastened to completion, and it was this that was being quietly installed down at Floyd Bennett Field. After careful tests, Wiley was ready to take off. On July 15, 1933, he started from Floyd Bennett Field with only a few friends and well wishers to see him off. He encountered all kinds of weather, but with the automatic pilot as relief, he kept pushing ahead at a terrific pace with a minimum of time spent on the ground to refuel and catch some sleep. Wiley found that on the stretches where the weather was good he could even take short naps while the gyropilot kept him steadied on his course. During the evening of July 21st, Post's progress on his final dash across the United States from Edmonton was broadcast hourly and thousands drove down to Floyd Bennett Field from miles around to witness his arrival. At one minute before midnight the white plane landed and rolled to a stop in front of the administration building amid floodlights and police desperately trying to hold back the crowds. As Wiley climbed out, he was greeted with the greatest ovation ever given to a flyer on Long Island. He had made a new record of 7 days, 18 hours and 49 minutes.

This was the last of the great flights which stirred the imagination of the public. Other long flights occasionally took off from Floyd Bennett during the next few years, but they were news only for the day and most of them have since been forgotten.



Codos and Rossi, two French aviators, took off from Floyd Bennett in their plane, the *Joseph Le Brix*, on August 5, 1933, and flew non-stop to Rayak, Syria, a distance of 5657 miles, a new record.

Dick Merrill and Harry Richman took off from the same field in September, 1936, for a round trip to London. Although completed, it was marred by forced landings, so in May, 1937, Merrill tried it again with Jack Lambie. This trip was undertaken to tie in with the coronation in London. Air mail was carried over to London and five days later, photographs of the coronation ceremonies were flown back to Floyd Bennett Field. The trip was the first commercial round trip of an airplane across the Atlantic.

In August, four Germans in a Focke Wulf Condor flew from Berlin to Floyd Bennett Field and a few days later flew back to Berlin. It was getting commonplace.

In 1938 there was one more stunt flight from Long Island which might well be mentioned as closing the amateur era. A young fellow named Douglas Corrigan took clearance from Floyd Bennett Field one day for California. Nothing was heard from him, however, until twenty-four hours later when word arrived from Ireland that he had landed at Dublin. He nonchalantly stated that he guessed he had gone the wrong way. He was dubbed "Wrong Way" Corrigan. The public was delighted. In it they saw the end of long-distance stunt flying. It was now too easy.

Corrigan did not realize how well he had timed his little joke. Next year, on June 24, 1939, the Pan American Airways inaugurated the first regular transatlantic airmail service. Pilot Harold Gray flew the *Yankee Clipper* from Port Washington, Long Island, to Southampton, England.

Transatlantic flying without missing a step moved smoothly from the exciting days of stunts to the routine business of the great airlines. Long Island has remained the western focal point of this great airpath from the days of the NC4 to the present days of heavy transatlantic traffic at LaGuardia Field.

The business of air transportation had been growing by leaps and bounds during the 1930s. Air mail, air express and passenger service were becoming big business. Municipal airports and government airways linked together all of the larger cities. New York City was still unhappy in having its airline terminal in Newark, New Jersey, not only outside of the city, but even outside of the State. Mayor LaGuardia made it one of his major projects to remedy this situation. A survey made in 1935 pointed to North Beach, Long Island, as a favorable site. Located on the north shore of Queens County, west of Flushing, it had advantages of being near the city and having unobstructed approaches over the surrounding water. There was already a small privately owned airfield called North Beach Airport, which had been constructed in 1929 on the site of an old amusement park. It was, however, quite inadequate in size, consisting of only 105 acres, but New York City leased it in 1935 and started to make elaborate plans. In September, 1937, the Board of Estimate approved the site for development, President Roosevelt approved the

work as a Works Project Administration project, and Mayor LaGuardia lifted the first shovelful of earth. A trestle was built from Rikers Island over Bowery Bay to the airport for use in transporting the great mound of cinders, ashes and rubbish from the Department of Sanitation's huge dumps on the Island to the airport for use as fill. The 105 acres was extended by filling out into Bowery and Flushing Bays until the acreage totaled 558. Seventeen million cubic yards of fill were moved. Large hangars and a fine administration building were erected. By 1939 the filling and construction project was so huge that it was employing 23,000 men. On October 15, 1939, the "New York Municipal Airport" at North Beach was dedicated with great ceremony by Mayor LaGuardia while large squadrons of Army and Navy airplanes circled overhead. Several years later the name was changed to LaGuardia Airport and as such it has risen rapidly to first place, the busiest airport in the world.

The figures are astonishing. In the year 1946 the transatlantic departures and arrivals alone included 3660 flights with a total of 104,000 passengers arriving or departing on these international flights. But the overall total of arrivals and departures for the year at LaGuardia Field, including the domestic as well as foreign flights, were 197,000 flights carrying over three million passengers. The airport handled many more passengers during the year than all of the marine ships entering and leaving New York Harbor.

The future shows no signs of leveling off at these figures. LaGuardia Field is already saturated and cannot expand. Hence, even a greater airport is in the making. Idlewild Airport on the shores of Jamaica Bay is already well along toward completion to take care of the great future of air transportation. It was dedicated by President Truman, Governor Dewey and Mayor O'Dwyer on July 31, 1948. But as it is part of the future instead of the past, it can find no place in this history except the comment that it gives assurance of Long Island's continued high place in air transportation far into the coming years.

So much for air transport or the business of flying. There is another phase of flying which cannot be overlooked in surveying the Long Island activities—that of pleasure flying.

A great wave of enthusiasm for pleasure flying swept the entire country after Lindbergh's flight. The public suddenly became air-minded. Many small flying clubs and private airfields sprang up in every state. Before they were well established, however, the depression came and few survived more than a year or two.

On Long Island, however, there survives a unique and outstanding club, the Long Island Aviation Country Club of Hicksville. For twenty years it has been the model for combining the pleasures of a country club with those of the personal airplane. Founded in 1928, it had a membership list which read much like the Blue Book. W. K. Vanderbilt, C. V. Whitney, W. A. Rockefeller, Harry Guggenheim, Nelson Doubleday, J. B. Forrestal, Douglas Fairbanks, F. Trubee Davison, C. A. Lindbergh, Grover Loening and Sherman Fairchild were a few of the charter members.





*Republic P-47N Thunderbolt*



*Republic Amphibian "Seabee" in Test Flight*



Under the leadership of Charles Lawrence of Baldwin, designer of the Wright Whirlwind engine, as its first president, a clubhouse, hangar, tennis courts and swimming pool were constructed. A fine all-turf field was laid out and on June 29, 1929, it was dedicated with an accompanying air exhibition. Since that time the annual garden parties and air shows, at which the manufacturers of personal airplanes have demonstrated their latest models, have been one of aviation's top social events. The club has always kept an atmosphere of the country club rather than the hangar and repair-shop atmosphere of the usual private flying field. Its success has made it world renowned and it will undoubtedly be the pattern for many such organizations in the future.

There are numerous other airfields on Long Island, among them MacArthur Airport south of Lake Ronkonkoma in Islip Town. This field was developed by the U. S. Civil Aeronautics Authority during 1942. Grumman and Republic each have large test fields adjacent to their plants.

In Suffolk County there are Suffolk Airport, a privately owned field near Riverhead; Suffolk County Airport, developed by C.A.A.; Easthampton Airport and several smaller privately owned fields.

The story of Long Island aviation cannot be closed without adding a brief section on the local airplane manufacturing activities. During the recent years of World War II, the aviation manufacturers have brought as much fame and honor to Long Island as did the flyers of the previous decades.

The building of airplanes on Long Island has been continuous since the earliest days when the inventors designed and constructed their own airplanes in the local hangars. The first substantial project, however, was the construction in 1918 of the Curtiss Engineering Laboratories in Garden City. Glenn Curtiss himself moved from Buffalo to Garden City to head it up. Curtiss was much more interested in airplane development than in war production and hence he left his big war plant in Buffalo in competent production hands so he could undertake special developments on Long Island. One of these was the secret long-range airplane for bombing Germany. Although not completed before the Armistice, it later became famous as the NC Flying Boat. After the war, the Garden City plant continued to turn out new models, a series of Curtiss racers which won the Pulitzer prizes each year from 1922 to 1925, and a sturdy line of training airplanes.

Shortly after the end of the first World War, young Lawrence Sperry left his father's gyroscope company and founded the Lawrence Sperry Aircraft Company, starting in an old factory in Farmingdale. Here he built one of the earliest amphibians. Then, in collaboration with Alfred Verville, he built the Sperry-Verville racing airplane in 1922. This low-wing monoplane was the first to have a retractable landing gear. It broke the world speed record in the Pulitzer race in that year only to be beaten a half hour later by another Long Island airplane, a Curtiss racer built at Garden City.





*Grumman TBF Avengers*



*Grumman Hellcat*



Then came the Sperry Messenger, a small general-utility airplane, which the Army adopted for message carrying. It was so easily handled that Sperry commuted regularly in it from his home in Garden City to his factory. He kept it in his garage, using a nearby vacant field for taking off and landing. Occasionally he even landed in the street. After Sperry's untimely death in 1923, when he was drowned in the English Channel, the company was dissolved and soon Sherman Fairchild took over the old factory. Fairchild's aircraft and engine activities grew rapidly and in 1927 he moved to a larger building of the Fulton Motor Truck Company just outside of Farmingdale. Fairchild manufactured airplanes and engines here until 1932. At this time he separated the airplane and engine activities, moving the airplane division to Hagerstown, Maryland, and continuing the engine division at Farmingdale as the Ranger Aircraft Engine Division. During the war years the Ranger plant expanded greatly and produced many thousand air-cooled, in-line engines for training planes as well as a great variety of components for the airplane companies.

Another company which was caught up in the terrific demands of the war years was the Sperry Gyroscope Company of Brooklyn. For twenty-five years prior to Pearl Harbor the company had carried on in the instrument development field with an average of less than a thousand employees. Suddenly the demand for airplane instruments, bombsights, aircraft gunsights and radar taxed the company so that it quickly outgrew its Brooklyn plant and five other leased factories in Brooklyn. By 1941 it was apparent that much more space was necessary. A site was chosen at Lake Success in Nassau County and in less than a year's time a huge modern plant of over two million square feet was constructed. Sixteen thousand employees were trained and put to work on the most advanced types of aircraft instruments and armament in the new plant. In all plants combined—Brooklyn, Lake Success, and an aircraft radar factory and laboratories in Garden City, Sperry employed a wartime peak of 32,000 persons.

There were many other smaller Long Island companies making accessories or components for the Air Force program. Edo Company of Port Washington, Liberty Aircraft Products Corp. of Farmingdale, Fairchild Camera Company of Long Island City, Kollsman of Elmhurst, are just a few of the many who contributed to the war effort in the air.

The most noteworthy airplane manufacturing enterprise is, however, the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation of Bethpage. Truly a Long Island story, we must go back to the first air meet at Belmont Park in 1910 to find there among the interested spectators a fifteen-year-old youngster from Huntington who had ridden his bicycle many miles to see the airplane races. His father ran a carriage shop in Huntington. Hence, it was natural that Leroy Grumman, with his aptitude for making things and his fascination with the airplane, should go to Cornell, obtain an engineering degree, plunge into World War I and come out of it a Navy pilot. After a short tour of duty at the Navy aircraft factory in Philadelphia, Grumman joined the Loening Aero Engineering Corporation as General Manager. Grover



Loening's company had been located at Long Island City, but he had moved to New York, where he was turning out his well-known amphibians. Here Grumman became acquainted with another Long Islander, Jake Swirbul of Sag Harbor. In 1929 Grumman and Swirbul decided to start their own company on a small scale. They set up in an empty garage at Baldwin, did general repair work, and designed an amphibian float which could be added to any Navy scouting plane to convert it into an amphibian. With this came the first Navy orders. Expansion caused them to move, first to a hangar in Valley Stream and then a year later, in 1932, to a larger plant in Farmingdale in which Fair-



*Republic P-84 Thunderjet*

First AAF jet fighter in 600-miles-per-hour speed class with range of over 1000 miles, ceiling above 40,000 feet

child had been building airplanes and engines. Here a series of successful Navy fighter planes were produced. In 1937 Grumman, again crowded, built and moved into his own plant at Bethpage, a fortunate move, as it gave him just enough time to become established there before the great demand of supplying Navy fighter planes for World War II fell upon them.

From the new Bethpage plant came the first groups of now world-famous "Wildcats", with which the Navy aircraft carriers entered the war. These fighters performed so well that after Pearl Harbor the demand rose immediately to thousands. The Grumman plant expanded from 700 employees in 1939 to 21,000 in 1944. Ninety per cent of these workers were Long Islanders—housewives, farmers, clerks, butchers, gas station proprietors. All were trained in special schools and became efficient participants of one of the most successful and important production feats of the war. The Grumman fighters were feared on all the oceans and turned in such outstanding group records as 223 Jap planes brought down with the loss of only 2 Grummans. During the war the even more effective "Hellcat" was put in



production. This was followed by the twin-engined "Tiger Cat", first seen at Okinawa, and the "Bear Cat", which also just reached the fighting before V-J Day. The war ended luckily just as Grumman ran out of names of fighting "cats". Progress did not stop, however, and the year 1947 closed with the announcement of their first post-war airplane, a jet-fighter, the "Panther", with a speed of "somewhere over 600 miles an hour".

At about the same time that Grumman moved into Farmingdale, another small company was struggling for existence by trying to create for the Army Air Corps the fastest fighter in the world. This company, founded in 1931 by Alexander P. Seversky, a well-known inventor and pilot, also settled in Farmingdale. All during the nineteen thirties, Seversky designed, built and broke speed records with his high-speed fighters. The Army Air Corps bought small quantities of them, but Air Corps appropriations suffered like everything else during the depression years and Army business did not boom.

So, in 1939, the Seversky Aircraft Company was reorganized, refinanced and became the Republic Aviation Corporation. Still sticking to the problem of producing a fast pursuit plane, Republic created and the Army accepted, in 1940, the first P-47, better known as the "Thunderbolt". This airplane became as famous in the Army as the "Wildcat" was in the Navy. Between the years 1941 and 1945, over 9000 Thunderbolts were delivered to the Air Corps by the Farmingdale factory. Republic also employed 25,000 persons at its wartime peak.

The total number of workers who served during the war years in the Long Island aviation plants was 90,000 persons. In 1939, before the war, the total number of employees in those same companies was only 5000 persons. It is to the great credit of Long Island that 84,000 men and women either left non-essential businesses or took manufacturing jobs for the first time in their lives, to help out the local aviation companies in meeting the tremendous responsibilities which were placed upon them by the war.

Now, as the Island settles down in the post-war era, things will be different. The aviation companies are not reverting to their pre-war size, but will remain approximately three times as large.

Grumman is starting to manufacture its jet-propelled "Panther" for the Navy. Republic has also produced a post-war, jet-propelled pursuit ship for the Air Forces: the P-84 or "Thunderjet" which is just going into production.

So Hempstead Plains, for many years familiar with the throb of airplane engines and propellers, now resounds to the roar of jet airplanes, heralds of a new era in the air. At Lake Success, in a portion of the large Sperry plant, Long Island is acting as host to the United Nations. The flags of fifty-seven nations fly from the poles around the oval in front of the administration building. The delegates meet in fine assembly halls constructed in the very space where military airplane instruments were assembled during the past war.

It is hoped that through the United Nations Organization the world, including aviation, can find a way to devote its energies to peaceful pursuits.





## CHAPTER XLIII

### *Duck Industry*

LEROY WILCOX

**D**UCK raising is a highly specialized industry in Suffolk County, where over six million ducks, or about one-half of all the ducks in the United States, are produced annually. Much has been written about the present-day management of Long Island duck farms in books, magazines and newspapers. Booklets which cover the field rather thoroughly, have been published by the United States Department of Agriculture, State experiment stations and feed manufacturers. Therefore I propose to confine this article mainly to the early foundation of the industry on Long Island and especially to show the growth in each village. As far as I know this historical information has never been compiled and published before, with the exception of that dealing with one or two farms.

Probably the first recorded facts dealing with the raising of ducks on Long Island was published in the book *Cottage Economy* by William Cobbett, at London in 1824. Cobbett was a famous English radical who lived in exile the greater part of 1817 and 1818 at North Hempstead, Long Island. In his book under the heading of "geese" we find the statement: "How is it that you see such fine flocks of fine geese all over Long Island (in America)". Under the heading of "ducks" he wrote: "They are, in Long Island, fattened upon a coarse sort of crab, called a horse-foot fish, prodigious quantities of which are cast on the shores. The young ducks grow very fast upon this, and very fat; but woe unto him that has to smell them when they come from the spit; and as for eating them a man must have a stomach indeed to do that! When you come to fat ducks, you must take care that they get at no filth whatever. I buy a troop when they are young and put them in a pen and feed them upon oats, cabbages, lettuce and water and have the place kept very clean. My ducks are, in consequence of this, a great deal more fine and delicate than any others that I know anything of".

This "horse-foot fish" no doubt is the Horseshoe Crab, *Limulus polyphemus* (Linnaeus). Cobbett's statements would probably indicate that Long Island farmers were interested in growing market ducks as early as 1820. These first ducks were common or so-called "puddle" ducks of rather small size. Common domestic ducks of a variety of colors were brought over from Europe to the United States by the early settlers.

Micajah R. Cock in his *The American Poultry Book* published in N. Y. in 1843, states: "that of the 45 species of ducks found in Europe and America only two have been so completely domesticated as to be rendered subservient to the uses of man. These two are, 1. *Anas (Gymnathus) moschata*, Muscovy Duck, a native in its wild



state of the tropical regions of America and 2. *Anas boschas*, or Mallard, the stock of our common tame duck''.

There are three classes of ducks—the meat class, the egg class and the ornamental class. Ducks in this country are used almost exclusively for meat. In the meat class are the well-known breeds, Muscovy, Rouen, Aylesbury, Cayuga and Pekin.

The Muscovy was introduced into the United States about 1840 from South America where it is a native of Brazil. The incubation



*One of Over Thirty Duck Farms on Long Island*

period for Muscovy eggs is thirty-five days while it requires only twenty-eight days for other domestic species.

The Aylesbury is a white duck very similar to the Pekin and was introduced into the U. S. about 1849. This duck originated in Aylesbury, England about 1700. This is now the popular market duck in England.

The Rouen originated from Rouen, France and was introduced into the U. S. about 1850. It has similar color markings as the wild Mallard.

The Cayuga Duck originated in Cayuga County, N. Y. about 1850 and is solid black in color.

The Pekin Duck which is the renowned "Long Island Duckling" of today was introduced into the U. S. from China in 1873. The



Pekin has the same standard weights as the Aylesbury. In 1888 the following standard weights were adopted: Old drake, 8 pounds; old duck, 7 pounds; young drake, 7 pounds; young duck, 6 pounds. In 1910 the weights were increased one pound in each class.

Probably all domesticated ducks, with the exception of the Muscovy, are descended from the wild Mallard, since they are characterized by the recurved tail feathers of the drake, a feature which no wild species besides the Mallard possesses. Moreover the wild Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* is the most plentiful and best known species of the *Anatinae*, which are fresh-water or surface-feeding ducks, and is widely distributed in the north temperate countries of both hemispheres. When the Aylesbury, Rouen, Cayuga or Pekins are crossed with wild Mallards the offsprings are not sterile but perfectly fertile which would seem to be proof that these domestic breeds all came originally from the wild Mallard.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) an article on growing market ducks on Long Island states: "Long Island geese and ducks are said to have had a reputation in the New York market long before the great expansion of interest in poultry which began between 1840 to 1850. I recall several instances to the celebrity of the domestic aquatic fowl of Long Island in files of agricultural papers of that period".

Duck raising was not a full-time industry until about 1880 to 1885; before that, raising ducks was a side line to farming or fishing. Prior to 1870 there had been several farms partially devoted to the production of ducks for the market. These farms were mostly on Long Island or the territory immediately adjacent to New York City from which came the only demand worth serious consideration and that demand almost entirely from the foreign population which had brought from the home shore a taste for waterfowl. The flesh of these early ducks was of poor quality, the birds were small in frame and had very little flesh-carrying capacity. The better development of the industry was waiting first for a suitable duck which did not appear until the Pekin was introduced in 1873. Before that time the white Muscovy is said to have been the favorite. In January 1886 Eugene O. Wilcox of Speonk (the writer's father) had 39 Muscovy breeders and 67 Pekins. In January 1887 he only had 5 Muscovy breeders but had 165 Pekins. Warren W. Hallock of Speonk also had Muscovies in 1885 as he purchased six drakes from my father in September. Stephen B. Wilcox of Speonk (son-in-law of W. W. Hallock and brother of E. O. Wilcox) also had some Muscovies in 1885. Many of the early duck raisers in Remsenburg also had Muscovies. The Aylesbury was not unknown but it had the general reputation in America of being rather delicate. Crosses were made of the Pekin with Aylesbury and other breeds but the pure Pekin was found to be much better adapted for commercial duck farming.

After extensive research I believe that *The Poultry World* (Hartford, Conn.) in the November, 1873, issue was the first poultry publication to announce the introduction of the Pekin Duck into the United States. There is an illustration of two Pekins on the front cover of this issue; probably the first time they were illustrated in



this country. William Clift of Mystic Bridge, Conn., had a short article on the importation of the Pekins; he also had an advertisement which read as follows: "Imperial Pekin Ducks. A few pairs for sale, at \$20.00 per pair. Eggs in Spring, \$10.00 per dozen".

In the April, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World*, Mr. Clift had an article: "Pekins were brought to this country from China by Mr. James E. Palmer of Stonington, Conn., and landed in New York on March 14, 1873".

The July, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World* gives credit to "Mr. McGrath of the firm of Fogg & Co., engaged in the Japan and China trade," for having discovered the Pekin duck in China in 1873.

In the August, 1874, issue of *The Poultry World*, Mr. Clift reported: "Not far from thirty female birds are laying eggs this season. With the usual loss in hatching and rearing, there will not be more than 500 young Pekins raised and the number may not reach 400. A large number are already sold and the demand will far exceed the supply. The imported birds of last year began to lay in Feb. this season".

At the Connecticut State Poultry Exhibition at Hartford, Dec. 16-19, 1873, the first exhibit of Pekin Ducks in America was held. Pekins were exhibited at the Western New York Poultry Exhibition, at Buffalo, Jan. 14-21, 1874. Pekins were in the 1874 American Standard of Perfection, adopted ten months after their first appearance in this country. There is probably no other case of a breed of poultry being given such recognition within a year of becoming known in this country.

In April, 1875, Mr. Palmer received a second lot of Pekins, four drakes and six ducks. The lot is said to have contained several birds superior to any in the first importation. One of the ducks weighed, when she commenced laying, eight pounds nine ounces; and the largest drake weighed ten pounds two ounces. In July, 1875, Col. M. Eyre, of Napa, Cal., then the most prominent poultry fancier of the far West, received a consignment of six birds—what were left of a dozen secured for him in China by a brother-in-law. So far as can be learned these three importations, in which were brought only twenty ducks that survived to be used as breeders, constituted the entire foundation stock of Pekin ducks brought to America up to that time.

After their introduction into the United States Pekins spread quite rapidly throughout the East and Middle West. They were advertised for sale in Illinois and Iowa in the *American Poultry Journal* of August, 1880. In the June, 1882, issue they were advertised in Kansas and Ohio and in the October issue breeders were advertised for \$5.00 per pair in Indiana.

The writer's father, Eugene O. Wilcox, kept records of his early start in the duck business at Speonk in 1883. As far as I know these are the only records left by a Long Island duck raiser giving us information on such matters as the first incubators, price of ducks, feed and feathers and names of some duck raisers back in the early eighties. In his inventory of breeding stock for January, 1884, Pekins were listed as breeders, but just when the first ones appeared on

Long Island is unknown. We only know that they made their appearance on Long Island sometime between 1873 and 1883.

Henry Raynor of Speonk was the first raiser to obtain Pekins in the Speonk-Eastport area according to William M. Edwards, one of the oldest residents of Eastport, who was interested in the duck business as he worked on some of the early farms and also had his own duck farm. Mr. Edwards stated that Brewster Tuttle and D. Parshall Tuttle were the first raisers in Eastport to use Pekins. They secured their stock from Henry Raynor.

There was a long experimental period before the duck industry began its course of steady expansion. E. O. Wilcox marketed 775 ducks in 1883, his first season in business at Speonk; 1101 ducks in 1884, 1566 in 1885, and 3466 in 1886. By 1901 he was hatching 30,000 ducklings annually. By 1897 about 200,000 ducks were produced annually by all the Long Island duck farms; by 1922 about 2,000,000 were produced annually by all the farms and in 1945 about 6,500,000 ducks were marketed. This great increase has been brought about mainly by the use of artificial methods in hatching and brooding.

Eastern Massachusetts and Long Island were the centers of the early duck industry. The Massachusetts raisers in those early days used the so-called dry duck farming—that is, they did not allow the ducks the use of creeks or streams. On the other hand, most of the Long Island growers allowed their ducks full freedom of ponds and streams. For a great many years there was a great deal of discussion among the duck growers as to which method was superior. Eventually the Long Island method proved to be much more economical than the other and the Massachusetts growers gradually changed their system and location so as to avail themselves of water range for their ducks. There were a number of early duck farms on Long Island in the eighties and nineties located entirely upland; notably in what is now Remsenburg (but which was Speonk prior to 1895) where during this period there were about fifteen duck farms of which twelve were upland and only three located on streams. Today out of the seventy-seven Long Island duck farms only one at Center Moriches is upland.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) an article on growing market ducks on Long Island states: "Until about 1890 natural methods of incubation and brooding were used by the L. I. duck growers and the output was thus limited. Growers were skeptical about incubators and brooders. J. L. Nix of the Prairie State Incubator Co. introduced incubators in this section and to do it he had to put incubators on a number of plants and stay with them, making the rounds daily with horse and buggy until he had practically demonstrated the advantages of the artificial hatcher"

Although the Prairie State Incubator probably had a greater sale among the duck raisers in the nineties than any other make yet it was not the first incubator in a L. I. duck farm. Luther Skidmore, an early duck raiser in the nineties in Riverhead, built some incubators for hatching his duck eggs.

No doubt I could have obtained some valuable information from my father who died in 1926 had I known that some day I would be



compiling data on the history of the duck industry. L. E. Hulse, duck raiser of Aquebogue, states that my father told him that he had built an incubator of his own which on one occasion hatched every duck egg set. I find in my father's records that he purchased a Perfect Hatcher Incubator on October 15, 1884, for \$140. This was probably the first incubator used on a Long Island duck farm.

The second incubator that my father bought was a Eureka Incubator, patented in 1879 and sold by J. C. Campbell, West Elizabeth, Allegheny Co., Pa., for \$100. This incubator received first prize Gold Medal at the Worlds Fair, New Orleans, La., in 1885.

The next incubator that my father purchased was a Monarch Incubator on October 10, 1887, price \$120. This incubator was invented, manufactured and sold by James Rankin, South Easton, Mass.

Later my father bought a Pineland Incubator, Jamesburg, New Jersey. The 1901 catalog of The Pineland Incubator Company states that that was the nineteenth season, which would mean that this incubator had been on the market since 1883.

By 1900 the Prairie State Incubator was probably the most popular incubator on the Long Island duck farms. My father wrote as follows on October 10, 1901: "I have used incubators for eighteen years and during that time have used several different makes. I have also seen most of the reliable ones on the market in practical operation and after all points have been considered, there is none that can compare with the Prairie State. I am using 47 of them and if I ever buy any more incubators you shall most assuredly get the order: but as I can get 30,000 ducklings from 47 machines I do not anticipate buying any more".

One of the largest raisers by 1900, W. H. Pye of Eastport, wrote under date of September 1, 1901: "I like the 85 new special duck machines you sent me very much indeed. In the last season I have hatched 55,000 ducks and have used your machines almost exclusively". Another large raiser, A. J. Hallock of Speonk, had 30 Prairie States by 1901, purchasing his first ones in 1891. He also had 30 Cyphers Incubators. D. H. Tuttle & Son of Eastport had used several kinds according to letter of October 14, 1901, and found the Prairie State the best they had ever used or seen. They were using fifteen 288 egg special duck machines.

Mrs. Stephen B. Wilcox, of Center Moriches, wrote under date of October 10, 1901: "I can heartily recommend the Prairie State Incubator as being without a peer. I now have 50 of your incubators on my place and during the 15 years in which I have used them I have been unable to find another incubator that would equal them". D. G. and Wm. C. Rogers' duck farm at Remsenburg had 5 Prairie States from 1892 to 1901. E. F. Tuttle of Eastport in 1901 said: "I have used Prairie States for several years and had better hatches than in any other machines".

After the Prairie State, the Cyphers Incubator made its appearance on the duck farms. Cyphers were placed on the market in 1896-1897 and manufactured by Cyphers Incubator Company, Wayland, New York. In the 1900 catalog they state: "Up to three years ago when the Cyphers was first put on the market the highest general

average for the season of all eggs set made by the large L. I. duck breeders was 38 per cent and L. I. produces over 200,000 ducks each year. A. J. Hallock of Speonk is using thirty 300 egg Cyphers Incubators purchased in 1897. He produces each year from 15,000 to 25,000 ducks''.

In the early summer of 1907 the incubator cellar of A. J. Hallock at Speonk, was destroyed by fire. This cellar contained eighty-three 300 egg Cyphers lamp machines having a capacity of about 25,000 eggs. The 1913 Cyphers catalog states: "The first Cyphers Mammoth Incubators (hot water) offered to the public were sold in 1907. These big machines were erected on Long Island, N. Y., and were for duck hatching. A 38,400 egg machine was installed in January, 1908, for A. J. Hallock, Speonk, and we installed an 8,250 duck egg machine at about the same time on Forge River Duck Farm, Center Moriches, T. V. Cox, Prop. Mr. Hallock ordered another Cyphers Mammoth of 12,000 egg capacity which we installed for him in the fall of 1908. On October 1, 1910, we were given an order to double the capacity of the Cox machine. Furthermore, E. O. Wilcox of Speonk watched the work of the Hallock machine and in November, 1909, had installed a 40 compartment or 14,000 egg capacity Cyphers Mammoth on his plant. After using this machine through an entire season, Mr. Wilcox, under date of September 12, 1910, gave us an order to install a second Cyphers Mammoth for him consisting of 24 compartments''. These apparently were the first hot water mammoth incubators installed on the Long Island duck farms.

Another early hot water mammoth machine was the Candee Incubator. In their 1916 catalog they state: "The Candee has supplanted hundreds upon hundreds of lamp and other types of incubators. It has been the choice of as high as 95% of the duck raisers in many localities''. They assert that the incubator cellar of C. H. Wilcox at Center Moriches was one of the largest in the world in which six Candee Mammoth Incubators were operated annually with total capacity of 44,400 eggs. A letter from Mr. Wilcox under date of May 2, 1913, reads: "This is our third year with your equipment which now consists of 62 sections or a capacity of 37,200 eggs. Will incubate this year about 120,000 eggs and have about 1200 breeders''.

Later there was a number of other hot water machines placed in operation on the duck farms such as Newtowns, Wishbones and Perfections. A great many of these are still in use on the farms but are slowly being replaced by electric incubators. Just as the lamp machines replaced the original and very limited method of hatching duck eggs with setting hens, and the hot water mammoths in 1908 meant the end of the troublesome lamp machines, so too the electric incubator will probably mean the end of the present hot water machines in the near future.

The first electric incubator purchased by a Long Island duck raiser was a Petersime Mammoth bought by Roy E. Pardee of Islip in February, 1927, and a second Petersime was purchased in 1931. The next raiser to purchase an electric incubator was Carman River Duck Farm (Charles E. Robinson) at South Haven. In 1934 Mr. Robinson purchased a Bundy Incubator from the Bundy Incubator



Co., Springfield, Ohio. This was operated only one season and Mr. Robinson purchased a Petersime in October, 1935.

In order to secure a more complete coverage of the history of the Long Island duck industry it might be well to list the known early duck raisers in each village.

On the south shore of Suffolk County the easternmost farm is located on Mecox Bay at Water Mill. The present owner of this farm is William Kronshage who is the fourth owner since the farm was



*World's Largest Duck Farm at Riverhead, Showing the Owner, Hollis Warner, Pointing*

established about 1910 by George E. Jones. Mr. Jones started in the business by purchasing his breeders from my father. He raised about 500 ducks the first year and gradually enlarged the farm until he raised about 5,000 a year. This farm has always sold a good portion of its ducks to the local summer trade of Southampton.

A duck farm was in operation at Sag Harbor from about 1905 to 1915. The owner was James Grey, a city businessman who hired W. Frazer Young as manager. Later Mr. Grey gave up the duck business and went into the chicken business.

Another duck farm just west of Sag Harbor, at Noyack, was operated by Thomas Eldridge from about 1890 to 1910. He had an incubator room with about ten Prairie State Incubators; he also used hens for hatching duck eggs. He raised about 3,000 ducks annually; some were shipped to New York City and the rest sold to

local butcher shops. He also ran a wagon to Southampton twice a week selling his ducks to the large summer homes and hotels.

At Hampton Bays there have been four separate duck farms. The Holzman Farm, the only one in operation at present, is located at the north end of the Shinnecock Canal on the west side. This farm was started by Mr. Holzman in 1907. At present about 25,000 ducks are raised annually. Albert Mickler owned a duck farm a short distance south of the Canoe Place Inn on Shinnecock Bay. It was in operation from about 1900 to 1918. Some of the buildings are still standing. Mr. Mickler raised from 7,000 to 8,000 ducks a year. No doubt the first duck farm at Hampton Bays was that of George E. Foster located a short distance north of the Shinnecock or Ponquogue Light House. Some of these duck buildings were standing until recent years but at present all trace of them has disappeared. This farm was started about 1881 or 1882 and was in operation until about 1930. At its peak about 5,000 ducks a year were produced on this farm. Mr. Foster's daughter who at present lives just across the road from where the farm was located advised me that the duck pickers prior to 1888 were paid two cents a duck and that the ducks were dry picked. She well remembers picking ducks for several years before 1888 when she was married. Just across the road from the Foster farm was the duck farm of Gilbert Penney who started about 1885 but only raised ducks a few years.

Another early duck farm was located at East Quogue. It was owned by John Quinn who began to raise ducks about 1882. Mr. Quinn was Postmaster at East Quogue by 1910 so that he went out of the duck business some time prior to that date. This farm was located just to the north of the present duck farm of E. F. McCormack, the only duck farm now at East Quogue. From my father's records I find that he sold six Pekin drakes to Mr. Quinn on August 5, 1886.

Willard F. Davis raised ducks upland just west of the L. I. Railroad Station at Westhampton. He was raising ducks prior to 1905 and continued up to about 1915, producing about 5,000 a year. At Westhampton on Beaver Dam Creek, a short distance north of the bay, was located the duck farm of John Rogers. He was raising ducks as early as 1886 as he bought nine Pekin drakes from my father that year. Mr. Rogers retired about 1922 and the farm has been vacant since. This was a small farm and it was probably the last one to use setting hens for hatching the duck eggs, as I well remember taking setting hens in feed bags over to his farm about 1912 to 1915. Two duck farms have been in operation at Tanners Neck, Westhampton on the next stream west of Beaver Dam Creek. The first farm in this locality was that of Sid Raynor who was raising ducks upland as early as 1886 as he bought some Pekins that year from my father. At the peak he raised about 3,000 a year. His farm was located on the west side of Tanners Neck Road. After Mr. Raynor's death in 1904 his son Archie continued the business in the same place until 1913 when he started raising ducks on the stream east of Tanners Neck Road. Archie raised 5,000 ducks in 1907. Part of his farm is the present Culver & Raynor Duck Farm. Chester Raynor (brother



of Archie) started raising ducks in 1910 on the same stream adjoining, to the north of Archie's farm, and it is still in operation.

The next farms to the west are the three farms located on Brushy Neck at Speonk. The north farm directly south of the Montauk Highway is that farm of Steve Kuczma, who is the fifth owner. This farm was started by Alexander C. Drogkamp about 1900. The next owner was E. Tichenor about 1910, followed by Faber, William Kronshage (who is present owner of the farm at Water Mill) and finally Steve Kuczma. The farm directly south of the Kuczma farm is the writer's farm started by E. O. Wilcox in 1883. This farm was called Sea Side Ranch in 1884; by 1889 it went under the name of Ensilage Duck Farm but soon after it was given the name of Oceanic Duck Farm under which name it is known today.

The book "Portrait and Biographical Record of Suffolk County" published in Jan., 1896, gives a sketch about my father as follows: "In the year 1883 the raising of ducks began to be discussed and tried as a side issue to farming. Mr. Wilcox experimented in that direction, and soon found that he had opened up a business that had no limits but capacity and cash. As his capital increased he went into it more largely, until it has now become an industry of great magnitude, he sending to market annually from 8,000 to 10,000 ducks, making him one of three men who stand at the very head of the duck business in the county. This industry is yet in its infancy, and in the near future a great improvement will be made in the flavor of the choicest ducks now on the market, which will be brought about by the scientific arrangement of their food, to which end Mr. Wilcox is experimenting".

My father came to Brushy Neck in 1883 from Ponquogue (Hampton Bays) where he and his father operated the Bay View Hotel just north of the Light House and adjoining the duck farm of George E. Foster. He may have come to Brushy Neck with the intention of starting in the duck business after observing the operation of the Foster farm, as he started in the business as soon as he arrived. From his records are taken the following numbers of poultry marketed in those early years:

Year	Chicks	Ducks	Doz. Eggs	Fowl
1883	321	775	...	...
1884	453	1101	2229	277
1885	1077	1566	1719	265
1886	271	3466	1710	105

He was hatching 30,000 ducks annually by 1901 and the farm reached its peak in 1940 with the production of 145,000 ducks.

The one L. I. duck farm that has had a continuous history running back into the period of primitive conditions is the Atlantic or Hallock Duck Farm which is directly south of the writer's farm and extends to Moriches Bay. Warren W. Hallock came to Brushy Neck in 1838 when twelve years old with his father Jonah. Warren Hallock began to make ducks an important product of the farm as far back as 1858. He divided his time between farming, following the bay and keeping summer boarders. By 1885 he was marketing annually between 4,000

and 5,000 ducks. In 1892 Warren Hallock died and the business passed into the hands of his son Arthur J.

The first published account of this farm was an article by M. K. Boyer in the February, 1893, issue of *Farm Poultry* (Boston, Mass.) as follows: "Hens were employed to do the hatching and brooding. Later on Mr. Hallock's son-in-law, Stephen B. Wilcox, was taken into partnership and his son Arthur J. (the present proprietor) was installed as 'feeder'. After Stephen Wilcox withdrew from the firm in 1891 to start a farm of his own at Center Moriches the son Arthur was taken into partnership and the firm name changed to W. W. Hallock & Son. Last year the senior member died. One thousand breeding ducks are kept and these are the cream selected from between 20,000 and 25,000 ducklings hatched". In 1900 this farm hatched 28,000 ducks and 4,000 chicks.

In the December, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry* an article states: "Capacity of Atlantic Farm was now 40,000 to 50,000 ducks a year. In addition Mr. Hallock was now operating a farm at Center Moriches belonging to his sister, Mrs. Stephen Wilcox, whose husband had been killed by the caving in of a well not long after he established the farm. The capacity of this farm was 20,000 to 25,000 ducks a year". In 1909 about 49,000 ducks hatched. In 1916 about 125,000 ducks were hatched — all hatched in 144 sections of Cyphers Mammoth. At this time this was considered to be the largest duck farm in the world. One writer made the statement: "Atlantic Duck Farm is doing today (1922) a business running between \$200,000 to upwards of \$225,000 a year and is without doubt by far the most profitable poultry farm in the world". This continued to be the largest duck farm until about 1938 when Hollis Warner of Riverhead became the largest raiser. At its peak, in 1938, Atlantic Farm produced about 260,000 ducks.

There were about fifteen duck farms in the eighties and nineties in what is now Remsenburg (but which was Speonk prior to 1895). Beginning in the eastern part of this village, about one-half mile west of Brushy Neck, was the farm of Gilbert Rogers located on the north side of the road. The next farms in order going west were those of Charles Smith, Henry Fordham, John Tuthill, Will Strong, Preston Tuthill and John Learie, all on the south side of the road. The next farm was that of Mott Tuthill on the north side of the road. All of the above farms were east of the present Remsenburg postoffice. Farms west and north of the postoffice were those of Byron Tuthill, Rensselaer Dayton, Oliver Raynor, William C. Rogers (directly west across the road from the schoolhouse), Ira B. Tuttle and Henry Raynor. Frank Ruland's farm was southwest of the church on Basket Neck Lane.

The only three farms that were located on streams were those of Charles Smith, Henry Fordham and Ira Tuttle; all the others were upland farms. Before 1900 the largest was probably Mott Tuthill. It is doubtful if any of these farms were in operation after 1900 except that of William C. Rogers who continued up to about 1920. The majority of these farms probably raised only about 1,000 ducks annually. Henry Raynor raised up to 2,000 a year — all hatched under hens. Charles Smith, Will Strong and William C. Rogers bought Pekins from my father in 1886. There are no duck farms at present



in Remsenburg and of these former duck raisers the only survivor is Ira B. Tuttle.

William H. Fordham raised ducks upland just west of Speonk railroad station. He started in 1897 and raised 6,000 ducks in 1899. The farm was no longer in operation by 1908. Another early duck farm at Speonk in the eighties, started by Lewis Raynor, is the present duck farm of Mike Stachnik. Alonzo Homan raised about 500 ducks a year upland from 1890 to 1893 at the western limits of Speonk on the south side of Montauk Highway. After going out of the duck business he caught fish and gathered eel grass for the duck raisers. During the coldest part of the winter when the bay was frozen over he got grass out of the fresh water ponds at Eastport, especially the upper part of Seatuck Creek where the pond did not freeze very much. He was paid one dollar a wagonload for the grass. The duck raisers especially desired the grass in winter to mix in the feed for the breeding ducks. At present there are seven duck raisers in Speonk but there are nine farms. Steve Kuczma has two, one on each side of Speonk Creek, and Murphy's Duck Farm of Eastport has a branch farm at Speonk.

Eastport has been the real center of the duck industry. It had a larger number of early farms than any other village and even at the present time there are more farms here than in any other village. Around 1900 there were about twenty-nine farms, of which many were small and several were upland farms. By 1912 there were about sixteen farms. Now there are fourteen raisers and fifteen farms. Harry Baker has two farms, one on each side of the east creek. Probably all the upland farms were out of business by 1900 or shortly thereafter.

I shall endeavor to list the early farms in Eastport prior to about 1912. Beginning at the eastern limits of the village there are two farms on the east side of the east creek. The first farm directly south of the L. I. Railroad is the Murphy Duck Farm established by Hugh Murphy in 1912. The next farm south is Harry Baker's farm established by his father-in-law, Capt. Gil Seaman, in 1903. Seaman raised ducks on the beach across the bay from Eastport from 1894 to 1903 while captain of the Moriches Coast Guard Station. On the west side of the east creek, just south of the L. I. Railroad, is the present farm of George Frey. This farm was started by Mrs. William H. Pye about 1906. From 1911 to 1917 it was operated by Chester A. Pitney & Brud Seaman (son of Capt. Gil Seaman).

Capt. Charles T. Gordon, while Captain of the Moriches Coast Guard Station, raised ducks on the beach from 1906 to 1922, when he came to the mainland and established a farm—the present Harry Baker farm on the west side of the east creek, directly south of Tuttle Bros.' farm. Between the Montauk Highway and the railroad, on the east side of the boundary stream between Southampton Town and Brookhaven Town, was the duck farm of Edgar F. Tuttle—the present Otto Sperling property and no longer used as a duck farm. Mr. Tuttle was in the business before 1900 as he wrote under date of Oct. 24, 1901, to the Prairie State Incubator Co.: "I have used Prairie State Incubators several years". There are seven illustrations of his

farm, including one of a duck picker entitled "The Champion Duck-Picker of L. I."

On the east side of this Town boundary stream, just south of the railroad, is the present Phillip S. Gordon farm. It is believed to have been established by David H. Tuttle and later operated by Wilson Gordon (father of Phillip S.). The next farm south is the present farm of Elizabeth Lubniewski established by Wilson Gordon, followed by Leonard Tuttle and then John W. Tuthill. The next farm south on this stream was the farm of Stafford J. Robinson who was operating there with his son-in-law, Wm. C. Newcomb, in 1910. This farm was between the present Lubniewski farm on the north and the Anczurowski farm on the south. This Robinson farm is no longer in operation. Directly south of this latter farm is that of Anthony Anczurowski established by Wilson Gordon who raised his first ducks on this farm before moving north to the other two farms. He lived in the north dwelling on the present Anczurowski farm. Fred P. Howland, brother-in-law of Mr. Gordon lived in the next house south and raised ducks. The next farm south on the stream was that of D. Parshall Tuttle who also raised ducks directly across the road on the east side of River Ave. All of the above farms south of the railroad are on the west side of River Ave. All of this land between the railroad and the bay west of River Ave. was owned by Daniel Gordon, father of Wilson.

The next farm south of Parshall Tuttle on the stream was the Archie B. Ketcham farm which was idle for a while until 1946 when Harry Baker raised some ducks there. Directly south of the Ketcham farm was that of David H. Tuttle who was in business here first before moving north on the same stream. Next south was the farm of William H. Pye. Both of these last two farms now comprise the present farm of Peter Kostuk. Mr. Pye began to raise ducks about 1890 according to "Portrait and Biographical Record" published in 1896, which states as follows: "Mr. Pye resigned his position, in 1884, on a vessel plying between New York and Florida and came to Eastport. In 1886 he bought land, where he now lives, erecting a cottage, which served him as a home until some two years ago, when it was disposed of and the present handsome residence erected. Some five years ago he established a duck industry, which has become an extensive business, putting into market each year between ten and twelve thousand ducks and chickens".

This was probably the largest duck farm on Long Island in 1900 as Pye wrote on Sept. 1, 1901, to the Prairie State Incubator Co.: "In the last season I have hatched 55,000 ducks". On September 4, 1907, he wrote to the Cyphers Incubator Co.: "I have been in the poultry business about 18 years and have had experience with four kinds of incubators". There are nine illustrations of his farm in the 1902 Prairie State Incubator Co. catalogue. There is an article on the Pye farm entitled "Duck Raising as an Industry" by Howland Gasper in the Jan. 7, 1905, issue of Scientific American Supplement with fourteen illustrations of the farm. The article states: "Mr. Pye was a bayman when he conceived the idea of starting a duck ranch. Being without funds he was obliged to secure credit for the lumber with



which the first buildings were erected. At the end of the first season his returns enabled him not only to pay all indebtedness, but afforded a substantial profit in addition. The capacity of the ranch was increased, a proportionate increase in profits being realized, and a few years later the output of one season exceeded 25,000 ducks. Mr. Pye's experience led many other parties to adopt the same occupation, and ranches of more or less pretentious dimensions arose throughout that section. Overproduction, as might be expected, was the result, and a number of ambitious raisers were practically ruined. The business was then, however, reduced to a substantial basis, and those now engaged in it are receiving an adequate profit''.

From my father's records I find that he sold 14 Pekins to Mr. Pye on September 9, 1885. By 1906 Mr. Pye was retired from the duck business. Hubert Drosser began to operate the farm in 1906. South of the railroad, about south of the church, is a small stream that runs south to southwest into the Town boundary stream. At the north end of this small stream (east of River Ave.) is the present farm of G. Henry Frey, the northern part of which was established by John W. Tuthill. It was later operated by Leonard H. Tuttle who was in the grain business while raising ducks. My father bought some feed from him as early as 1906. Just to the north of G. Henry Frey's farm was the farm of Dubois D. Tuttle (brother of Leonard H.) located about 500 feet south of the railroad, east of River Ave. They were sons of David E. Tuttle, duck raiser on the west side of River Ave. The southern part of Henry Frey's present farm was the farm established by Luther Tuttle (brother of John W. Tuthill) in 1896 and continued in operation by him until 1922. The next farm south of Luther Tuttle was that of his brother Frank P., who owned the northern part of the present farm of Frank Lubniewski who stopped raising ducks about 1944. The southern part of this Lubniewski farm was established by D. Parshall Tuttle, father of four sons in the duck business—Luther, Frank P., and Richard C. Tuttle, and John W. Tuthill. It is believed that Parshall Tuttle and Brewster Tuttle, who were cousins, were two of the first raisers in Eastport.

Just south of Parshall Tuttle's farm at the southern end of this small stream were the farms of Richard C. Tuttle and George Williams. The latter stopped raising ducks about 1924. In July 1910 R. C. Tuttle bought forty-four drakes from my father. On the west side of the boundary stream between Southampton Town and Brookhaven Town, just south of the railroad, was the farm of William P. Howland (father of Fred P. who had a farm on the east side of the same creek). William P. was one of the earliest raisers in Eastport, according to "Portrait and Biographical Record" of 1896. This sketch on his life states: "When seventeen years old in 1853 he determined to try life on the water and followed the sea for fifteen or twenty years. Although our subject has raised a large number of ducks for the past twenty years, he has not given this business his exclusive attention until within the past three years, and during 1894 raised over 2,000 ducks". He bought drakes from my father in Aug., 1901.

The next farm south was that of Fred Tuttle (son of Brewster Tuttle) who was in the business at least until 1912. The next farm

south was that of Elisha Cuffee, reported to be a Shinnecock Indian, who raised ducks before 1892. The next farm south is the present Eugene Warner farm established in 1893 by Capt. William H. Mott who was also a dealer in feathers and grain. Ben Seaman (brother of Capt. Gil) owned the next farm south. He was raising ducks before 1893. The farm was later operated by Stafford Robinson who came there soon after 1910 from directly across on the east side of this creek. This is now a part of the present Warner farm. South of the Ben Seaman farm was that of Jesse Rogers. The next farm south was that of Charles Steinke, who stopped raising ducks about 1913. He had raised up to 35,000 a year. Both the Jesse Rogers farm and the Steinke farm were operating prior to 1893. The Steinke farm is now the south part of the Eugene Warner farm. The present Mottus farm down on the end of this neck, on the bay, was started by Ben Seaman who later went north to establish the farm just south of Capt. Mott.

On Seatuck Creek, near the bay, was the farm of J. L. Tyler who bought some Pekins from my father in 1886. This is the present Z. Babinski farm. Tyler had a small farm; he was also a fisherman as my father bought fish from him in 1902. There were several upland farms in Eastport prior to 1900. John Edwards raised ducks north of the village, on the north side of the Country Road, at the extreme northern end of Bay Ave. Manasseh Penney established a farm north of the Country Road, west of the Eastport Country Club. Later John B. Keck and William J. Lukert were in partnership for about a year on the same farm in 1893. They bought incubators and ducks in April, 1893, and in March, 1895, Mr. Keck bought drakes from my father. In 1894 Mr. Lukert went to Moriches where he established the present Lukert farm. Mr. Keck worked on A. J. Hallock's farm at Speonk, presumably to get experience before going into business for himself. Mr. Keck went from Eastport to Amityville where he was manager of a duck farm for a city man, H. D. Klinker.

Pat Collins raised ducks for a while just south and east of the Keck & Lukert farm. Roy Ketcham raised ducks upland about 1895 on the north side of Montauk Highway, about one thousand feet east of the church, where H. S. Sorrell's garage now stands. Harry Ketcham raised ducks just to the west of Roy, his brother. They both had incubators. Frank Brown raised ducks just west of the church on the north side of Montauk Highway from about 1896 when he left the U. S. Life Saving Service until about 1901. He raised up to about 3,000 a year. Mr. Brown states that ducks were dry picked up to 1900 and that many farms went out of business at that time because the price went down to ten cents a pound. James Peterson raised ducks upland, just west of Mr. Brown, about where the school auditorium is now located. He started before Mr. Brown and had stopped raising ducks by 1900. He was the father of Mrs. A. K. Smith, duck raiser of East Moriches. Ralph Tuttle raised ducks upland, the third house west of the school house on north side of Montauk Highway. He was in the business before 1896 and had gone out of business by 1902. He was one of the largest upland raisers. Ralph and his father, George H., were the only ones in the grain business with a storehouse for feed



in Eastport prior to 1900. It was located on the duck farm. They delivered feed by horse and wagon to the duck farms and if they had any feed left over out of a carload they stored it in their warehouse so that they had a supply of feed on hand for the raisers. My father bought feed from them in May, 1903. Later they opened a warehouse south of the L. I. Railroad Station where the new duck packing plant is now being built. Later the Brooklyn Elevator & Milling Co. used this building to establish their Eastport branch warehouse there. This building has just been moved to the west of the new duck packing plant.

Another upland raiser was William M. Edwards and his father, Moses, who raised ducks on the north side of Montauk Highway in the western limits of the village a short distance east of the branch railroad to Manorville. Later Wm. M. Edwards raised ducks upland about 1891 on the Eastport Country Club grounds on the Country Road. Brewster Tuttle raised ducks upland on the south side of Montauk Highway, south of the school house, about one hundred feet east of River Ave., where Wm. M. Edwards now lives. Mr. Tuttle bought Pekin drakes from my father in September, 1888. He was probably out of the business by 1900. In 1906 and 1907 my father bought many wagonloads of grass for duck feed from him.

At East Moriches, southeast of the village near the bay, is located the present Stanley Ogeka farm, established about 1895 by H. D. Terry who was in business up to at least 1913 as he wrote a testimonial on May 20, 1913, to the Candee Incubator Company. At that time he had 10,200 egg capacity incubators. Later his son-in-law, Mayhew Tower, operated the farm. Samuel S. Overton had a small farm in the eastern part of the village, a short distance south of Montauk Highway, directly south of the present garage of F. D. Anton & Son. In addition to raising ducks he also had a blacksmith shop north of his duck pond and to the north of his shop was the wheelwright shop of George Baker. This entire property is now known as Frank Anton's Garage. Mr. Overton raised about 1,000 ducks a year from 1893 to 1895 when he moved to Center Moriches and established a duck farm on the west side of Senix Ave.

Directly south of East Moriches on the bay was located the duck farm of Edward E. Brown & Deforest Hulse, operated from 1907 to 1910. In 1910 Mr. Brown established his own farm in the western part of the village on Bay Ave., where the farm is still in operation. Mr. Hulse also started a farm on Bay Ave. in 1910, the present Stanley Chornoma farm. On Bay Ave. the first farm south of and abutting Montauk Highway is the farm established by A. K. Smith in 1914 and still in operation under Mrs. A. K. Smith. Directly south of this farm is one established in 1911 by his brother Robert who operated it until 1913 when he was killed. His brother Townsend took the farm over in 1913 and it is now operated by the latter's son Walter R. Directly south of this farm is that of Reginald L. Smith who established the farm with his brother Robert in 1905. It was operated by both until Robert established his own farm in 1911. The next farm south was established by Deforest Hulse in 1910. It was operated by Erving Robinson from 1912 to 1917 and is now operated by Stanley Chornoma.

George Sargent established the next farm south, buying the land in Aug., 1895. In 1906 Walter Chichester took the farm over and is still the owner although his son-in-law, John G. Leary, is operating it. Edward E. Brown established the next farm south in 1910 and it is still in operation under Mrs. E. E. Brown. Joseph Podlaski operates the next farm south. It was established by Dr. James Mad-dren in 1912. All of these seven adjoining farms on Bay Ave. are



*Electric Incubators Showing the Author*

on the west side of the road. At present there are twelve duck farms in East Moriches.

Charles Warner (brother of Eugene, Eastport raiser) was probably the first one known to raise ducks in Center Moriches, beginning about 1885. He raised about 300 a year for two years, leaving Center Moriches in 1887. He raised ducks first in Center Moriches on the east side of Senix Creek about midway between Montauk Highway and the bay. Later he moved back to Center Moriches and after residing there some time he started to raise ducks again on the east side of the first stream east of Senix Creek, west of Ocean Ave. and east of Union Ave. He continued in business up to about 1924. In 1920 or 1921 Mr. Warner bought Purina chicken laying mash for his duck breeders; probably the first commercial mixed feed used on a L. I. duck farm.



On the west side of Senix Ave., on West Senix Creek, is the present farm of Clifford B. Bowditch, started by him and R. A. Tuttle (son of Brewster Tuttle, Eastport raiser) in 1912 and operated as a partnership until 1919. The next farm south is that of Victor Jaroszewicz. It was formerly two old farms; the north one owned by Isaac Smith from 1888 to 1911, then operated by R. A. Tuttle down to the present owner, and the south farm established by Samuel S. Overton in 1895, later operated by Eggelston & Deary for about two years and by Merritt from 1914 for about two years. Below this farm was one established by Elkana Robinson in 1891 and operated until 1894. Another farm south of this was established by Al Seaman in 1897 and operated about two years; in 1913 Fred Edwards & Hamm operated it for about a year; Hamm & William Smith ran it from 1914 to 1915 and Walter Newins from 1915 to 1917, after which it was no longer used as a duck farm.

On the next stream west, a branch of Forge River, are located two adjoining farms. The north farm was established in 1891 by Stephen B. Wilcox who came from Speonk after raising ducks there for several years. He was killed shortly after by a well caving in. The farm is now operated by his son, Chester H., who is president of the L. I. Duck Farmers Association. There are twelve illustrations of this farm in the 1902 catalogue of the Prairie State Incubator Co. In 1908 the capacity of the farm was 20,000 to 25,000 a year. The farm produced 90,000 ducks annually by 1922. The next farm directly south was established by T. V. Cox about 1906 with R. A. Tuttle as manager. Before the advent of electricity (March, 1916, at Brushy Neck, Speonk) Mr. Cox, according to information available, was the only raiser to use lanterns at night in his duck buildings to quiet the ducks. About 1926 W. G. Matteson took over the farm and is still raising ducks there. These two farms are on the west side of Old Neck Road. At present there are five farms in Center Moriches.

In Moriches there are now seven duck farms but only one has been long established. It was started in 1894 by William J. Lukert who raised ducks at Eastport before going to Moriches. It is now operated by his sons.

At Brookhaven, just south of the railroad station, on the east side of Railroad Ave., is the farm of Egnatz Leszkowicz, probably the third largest duck farm on L. I. It comprises what were three separate farms. The southern part of the present farm was established by Victor T. Knies in 1905 who operated it for about a year or two. Tony Savage operated it later. The other two farms were started much later. An interesting side light on the originator of this farm, Mr. Knies, is that he came out to Speonk in 1899 to visit my father. Later he wrote to my father from New York City on Oct. 23, 1899, stating that he was still looking for land suitable to start a duck farm. He had been out to Lake Ronkonkoma but could not find a suitable tract of land. He wanted to locate on a creek and said he expected to go out soon to Patchogue.

There is a duck farm at South Haven on Carman River, between the Montauk Highway and the railroad, established in 1922 by Charles E. Robinson.

Gallo Bros. have a farm at East Patchogue, north of Robinson Blvd., established by them about 1920. They raise about 150,000 ducks a year. To my knowledge there are no farms at present west of Patchogue raising market ducks.

There was a farm at Islip established in 1920 by Roy E. Pardee, who is now Town Clerk of Islip Town. The farm was discontinued in 1936. He and I took the poultry course at Cornell University in 1919-1920. He worked on the Hallock farm at Speonk for a few months to learn the business, as other duck raisers had done before. He was the first L. I. duck raiser to have an electric incubator. In 1915 he spent six months in Pekin, China, "looking for outstanding white ducks, but found nothing to compare with those grown here on L. I. In fact most of the so-called white ducks were gray or had black spots or a few black feathers. They weighed about 3 to 3½ pounds". Mr. Pardee had two aunts at Baldwin who made quite a reputation with ducks in the 1890's. They bought drakes from my father in Feb., 1891.

There was a duck farm at Amityville established about 1895 by H. D. Klinker who bought 260 breeders from my father on Sept. 13, 1895. John B. Keck, manager of the farm, came from Eastport where he had a duck farm prior to that. He reported in the 1901 catalogue of the Pineland Incubator Co.: "that out of 22 Pineland Incubators he recently hatched over 8,500 ducks".

In the December, 1887, issue of *The American Poultry Journal* was an advertisement of Blithewood Poultry Yards, Parkville, Kings Co., which read as follows: "Long Island poultry and eggs are justly celebrated the world over. Pekin Ducks — Eggs in Season".

On July 27, 1905, a Mr. Harrington who, presumably, had a duck farm at Wantagh, bought 20 drakes from my father.

Since writing the above I have learned of the existence of two more early farms at Westhampton. They were located on the east side of Beaver Dam Creek. The first farm just south of the Montauk Highway was established by Frank Gordon who was out of the business by 1905. Just south of him was the farm of Daniel Skidmore who bought 18 drakes from my father on Oct. 15, 1895. He too raised ducks only a few years.

William Bonner had a duck farm at Rockville Centre established in 1902. He had an advertisement in the January 15, 1908, issue of *Farm Poultry*, advertising Pekin ducks (eggs, ducklings and breeders). He introduced new blood in his flocks by imported Japanese ducks.

This completes all the old duck farms known to the writer on the South Shore of Long Island.

There was a farm on Fishers Island (part of Suffolk Co.), in L. I. Sound, operated by E. M. and W. Ferguson according to a letter of Oct. 3, 1899, written to the Cyphers Incubator Co. They raised Pekins mainly for the summer hotel trade there. At Flanders is the oldest known duck farm on the north side of Long Island. This is the present Thomas I. Havens farm established by his father-in-law, Samuel S. Griffin, about 1885. Mr. Griffin followed the sea from 1865 to 1885 when he came home to manage the farm. By 1895 he was raising 5,000 ducks a year besides large numbers of turkeys and



geese. The farm is located on Peconic Bay. Mr. Griffin obtained his first breeding ducks from his brother-in-law, George Foster, at Pon Quogue (Hampton Bays). This is still the only farm in Flanders at present.

In Aquebogue there are four farms. The L. E. Hulse farm on Peconic Bay Blvd. was established by Mr. Hulse in 1913 and is still in operation. Harry Corwin established in 1913 the present farm of Harry Corwin & Son. The present farm of Joseph P. Celic was established by John Warner (father of Hollis, Wesley and Olin—all duck raisers) in 1914. William Worm was the next owner and Mr. Celic came there in 1936. This is probably the second largest duck farm in the world.

Apparently the first duck farm in Riverhead was established by George Pugsley about 1892. It is now the eastern part of Hollis Warner's farm at the extreme eastern end of Riverside Drive, on the north side of the road, across from A. B. Soyars & Sons farm. Mr. Pugsley operated the farm until about 1897 when Joe Worm took it over. Dennis Homan was the next owner. Hollis Warner, the present owner, with the production of two other farms, now has the largest duck farm in the world with a yearly output of about 500,000 ducks. In 1897 Mr. Pugsley left this farm and went west of Riverhead to establish a duck farm, now owned by Carmine Bruno. Asa D. Fordham established in 1894 the present A. B. Soyars & Sons farm selling out to Mr. Soyars about 1902. Luther Skidmore started a farm south of Riverside Drive, about three-quarters of a mile west of the Pugsley and Fordham farms, about 1897. He operated it only a few years up until his death. Mr. Skidmore built and used some of his own incubators. It has never been used as a duck farm since.

At Upper Mills, about a mile west of Riverhead village, is the farm of Carmine Bruno established in 1897 by George Pugsley. It is on the north side of the main road to Calverton and probably produces a heavier duck on an average for the entire season than any other farm, due to the fact, supposedly, that the ducks are not as crowded as on most farms and have access to good water and shade during the hot months. Careful selection of breeders no doubt is another important factor. There are now eleven duck farms in Riverhead.

In Calverton the first farm was started by Porter Howell in the fall of 1914. This is the present farm of Olin F. Warner. There are now five farms in Calverton. There is a small farm, recently established, at Manorville by Stanley Horton.

This completes the history of the early duck farms in each village as far as known to the writer, who would appreciate additional information on any farms not mentioned.

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